

Chronicles

July 2006

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

\$3.95



PERIODICAL

#BXBFHJ*****AUTO**ALL FOR ADC 941
#94301UZ555BY003# OCT 08 TURE 5799
RON UNZ
555 BRYANT ST # 371 S 144 434
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704



30 YEARS
FIGHTING THE CULTURE WAR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Rockford Institute and
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture

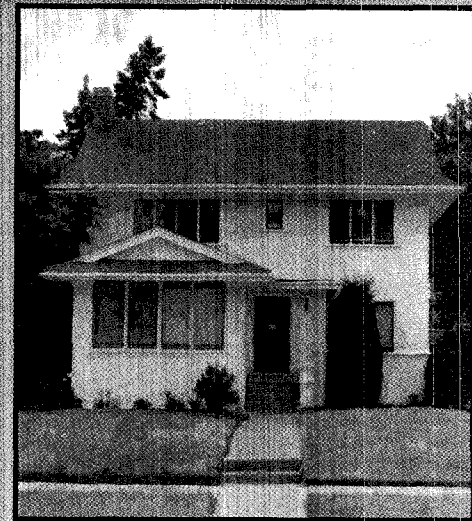
present

The 17th Annual Meeting of the John Randolph Club

"Global Problems, Local Solutions"

October 13-14, 2006

in *Chronicles'* hometown,
Rockford, Illinois

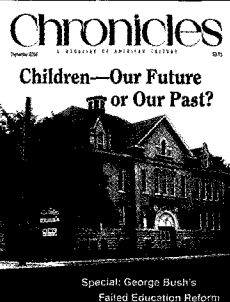
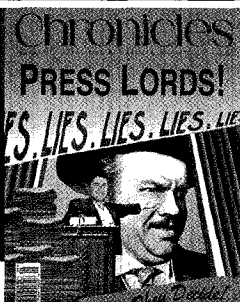
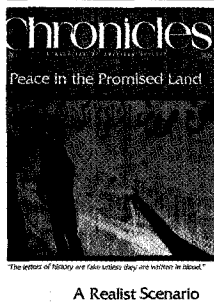


Join *Chronicles* editor Thomas Fleming, along with Christopher Check, David Hartman, Roger McGrath, Stephen B. Presser, Srdja Trifkovic, Chilton Williamson, Jr., and others at Rockford's premier hotel, Cliffbreakers River Suites, for a weekend of lively, candid, and intelligent discussion on local solutions to immigration, abortion, jihad, the decline of manufacturing, and other cultural and political ills afflicting America.

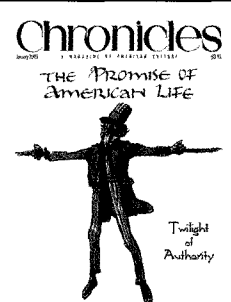
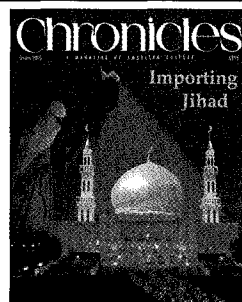
A limited number of rooms are available at Cliffbreakers (700 W. Riverside Blvd., Rockford) at a special rate of \$79.00, single or double occupancy, continental breakfast included. Please call (815) 282-3033 by October 1 and mention the John Randolph Club

SPECIAL PRE-JRC PROGRAM: "Unpatriotic Conservatives!"

Join us Thursday evening, October 12, for a dinner celebration of *Chronicles'* 30th birthday as *Chronicles* editors answer their neocon accusers. On Friday, help plan future issues of *Chronicles* as you take part in a *Chronicles* luncheon and editorial meeting. Space is limited for this special program.



Chronicles
30
years



**Special black-tie banquet on Saturday night, featuring a debate on
"Chronicles and the Limits of Dissent in Times of National Crisis."**

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE/FAX _____

EMAIL _____

☐ Please add my address to the Institute's e-mail list

Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ to the Rockford Institute's Scholarship Fund so that worthy young students can attend this important event.

Make checks payable to the John Randolph Club. Mail with completed form to: JRC, The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103

or pay by credit card by calling Cindy Link at (800) 383-0680.

For student rates, panels-only rates, or other information, contact Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811.

N.B.: All prices increase \$30.00 after September 15, 2006

SPECIAL CHRONICLES 30TH BIRTHDAY PROGRAM

(THURSDAY EVENING DINNER EVENT, FRIDAY LUNCHEON, SPECIAL EDITORIAL MEETING)

JOHN RANDOLPH CLUB FULL REGISTRATION

(FRIDAY EVENING OPENING ADDRESS AND RECEPTION, SATURDAY PANELS, SATURDAY LUNCH, SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET AND PROGRAM)

____ @ \$75.00 EA = \$ ____

____ @ \$225.00 EA = \$ ____

____ @ \$250.00 EA = \$ ____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ ____

Open to all *Chronicles* subscribers!



Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

PERSPECTIVE

Violent Revolution
by Thomas Fleming

10

Women in bondage.

VIEWS

Hollywood Blues

by George Garrett

A culture of grand illusions.

Culture War

by Clyde Wilson

Fighting on.

Dressing for Progress

by Andrei Navrozov

A culture of lovelessness.

An American Dilemma

by Tom Landess

The Episcopal Church (1976-2006).

RUOK? AWHFY?

by James O. Tate

Communication in the vast wasteland.

O Literature, Thou Art Sick

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The consequences of theory.

INTERVIEW

Rendering Us Again in Affection

by Katherine Dalton

An interview with Wendell Berry.

REVIEWS

The Reign of Grantham

by Derek Turner

Alfred Sherman: *Paradoxes of Power: Reflections on the Thatcher Interlude*

Claude Polin on Alistair Horne's *La Belle France: A Short History* ♦ John Willson on Leon Wolff's *Little Brown Brother* ♦ James O. Tate on Moriz Rosenthal in *Word and Music*, Mark Mitchell and Allan Evans, eds. ♦ Tobias Lanz on Ted Steinberg's *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn* ♦

CORRESPONDENCE

14 Letter From Texas: The Fire Next Time 54
(A Message to Culture Warriors) by Wayne Allensworth

17 Letter From Berlin: Down to Earth—With 55
a Thud! by Curtis Cate

VITAL SIGNS

19 COMMONWEAL: The New Reality 60
by R. Cort Kirkwood

COLUMNS

21 SINS OF OMISSION by Roger D. McGrath 12

24 THE BARE BODKIN by Joseph Sobran 13

HERESIES by Aaron D. Wolf 48

BREAKING GLASS by Philip Jenkins 49

28 THE ROCKFORD FILES by Scott P. Richert 50

THE AMERICAN INTEREST by Srdja Trifkovic 58

IN THE DARK 62

31 *United 93*
by George McCartney

THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN 64
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

AMERICAN PROSCENIUM 6

41 CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 7

ON THE COVER

Cover by George McCartney, Jr. Inside illustrations by Melanie Anderson, Elizabeth Wolf, and Nicholas Garrie.

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

INTERIOR ARTIST
George McCartney, Jr.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, George Garrett,
Tom Landess, Joseph Sobran,
James O. Tate, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Wayne Allensworth, Donald Livingston,
Roger D. McGrath, William Mills,
William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov,
Claude Polin

FILM EDITOR
George McCartney

FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

Copyright © 2006 by The Rockford Institute.
All rights reserved.

Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for
\$39.99 (foreign subscriptions add \$12 for
surface delivery, \$48 for Air Mail) per year by
The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street,
Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical
postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional
mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount
Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the
authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the
views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors.
Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned
unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped
envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 30, No. 7 July 2006
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Hard Cases

Thomas Fleming's reflections on the Schiavo case ("New Wine in Old Bottles," *Perspective*, May) disappointed but did not surprise me, since, a few years back, he defended our government when it handed over Elian Gonzalez to the tender mercies of a totalitarian government. In both cases, the crux of his argument seems to be the right of the husband and father, as head of the family, to make decisions on behalf of family members. As far as I know, no legal system informed by Christian teaching gives the *paterfamilias* the right of life and death over family members, a right he enjoyed in Roman times.

The Schiavo case was not a question of the husband, Michael, making decisions regarding medical treatment for his incapacitated wife. It was a matter of his making the decision to terminate her life. That is what depriving a patient of nutrition and hydration does. These things, in Catholic teaching, are not extraordinary treatment or, indeed, treatment at all, but merely the care owed to any sick person.

Christian teaching certainly affords the family substantial authority and autonomy, but that does not mean the state has no jurisdiction in family matters. The state has a fundamental duty to protect innocent life, which means that the family's autonomy does not extend to a right of the head of the family to murder family members. This is a matter of criminal, not family, law. And, through much of the history of Christendom, the Church limited the excessive powers exercised by extended families by attempting to replace the power of the clans with the rule of law.

Of course, in the Schiavo case, there is another question: Does the head of household retain his authority when he has abandoned his family, as Michael Schiavo did by cohabiting with another woman and having children by her?

Dr. Fleming fails to address the blatant lack of impartiality in the judicial process that led to Terri Schiavo's execution. Judge Greer consistently refused even to consider testimony that might have led to a different result in the case, while basically blowing off such evidence when he bothered to look at all. The most egregious instance of this involved

testimony from a friend of Terri Schiavo, who stated that, during the 1980's, she (the friend) had made a rather callous joke about the Karen Ann Quinlan case, provoking an angry reaction from Terri, who opposed taking Quinlan off a ventilator and opined that, "while there's life, there's hope." This, if true, tended to refute Michael Schiavo's claim that Terri had said she would never want to be kept alive in a "vegetative" state. Judge Greer stated that, since Quinlan had died during the 1970's, and since the conversation had allegedly occurred while Quinlan was still alive, Terri Schiavo would have been so young at the time that what she said could not be taken seriously as reflecting her mature thinking. The attorneys for Terri's parents, the Schindlers, pointed out that the judge had his facts wrong: Quinlan had died in 1985. The judge acknowledged this but refused to reverse his ruling, simply stating that he still did not consider the witness's testimony credible. Judge Greer clearly had decided on the outcome of the case before the first scrap of evidence was heard. He should have been impeached and prosecuted, and his decision thrown out.

Dr. Fleming echoes the arguments of Terri Schiavo's murderers when he says that, "before the autopsy, there was some room for doubt about her prospects (though no competent physician who examined her thought so)." But "her prospects" were not the issue, if by this Fleming means the possibility of a full or partial recovery. Even if no improvement was possible, Terri Schiavo was still alive and probably conscious to some extent. Her life was entitled to protection. The severity of her disability did not change that. And what are Dr. Fleming's particular qualifications for evaluating medical competence? Physicians hired by the Schindlers supported their belief that Terri had some awareness of what was going on around her. Is Dr. Fleming in a position to know that these physicians were incompetent? Furthermore, the autopsy established nothing on this point. The pathologist who conducted it said that it was impossible to know, from its findings, whether she was in a persistent vegetative state or whether she had any consciousness. The autopsy did find that the brain was severely shrunken, but that was likely the result of two weeks of dehy-

dration. The truth is, there was an overreliance on technical expertise in this case. Science does not have the kind of magical ability people attribute to it to know the truth about these situations. Terri's family, who had known and loved her all her life, believed she was conscious and aware, so the court ought to have accepted this as most likely the case, rather than relying on experts who spent perhaps an hour examining her.

Underlying Dr. Fleming's arguments is his blanket rejection of universalism. He is correct, of course, in rejecting the distorted universalism of the so-called Enlightenment and the Renaissance but doesn't seem to understand that there is truth behind the distortion, a truth grounded in Christianity. Embedded in Christianity is the vision of an ordered creation that is good, because it is grounded in the goodness of the Creator, as well as of a human nature that, while distorted by sin, is good because it is made in the image and likeness of God. Hence the dignity and inviolability and, yes, the *rights* of the human person in the context of natural law, an order that has to be the basis for all legitimate positive law. Without that understanding of things, we end up with legal positivism, in which law is grounded only in the arbitrary will of the lawgiver. Again and again, Dr. Fleming seems to be saying that the law is the law whether it is just or unjust, and we are obliged to obey it. If that means allowing a sociopath to manipulate the law in order to murder an innocent person, so be it. This is in sharp contrast to Catholic teaching, which holds that an unjust law is no law at all and has no moral claim on our obedience.

Our elites are in the process of imposing Hitler's euthanasia program on us. It would behoove Dr. Fleming to become at least a little alarmed at this development, rather than waste time and column inches attacking those who are trying to do something about it.

—George A. Kendall
Grand Marais, MI

I'm very disappointed that Thomas Fleming ruined an otherwise fine article by defending the court-ordered starvation murder of Terri Schiavo. He mentioned the autopsy: How would *your* brain look after 13 days of dehydration and starvation? Might it have shrunk a tad? Her parents loved her and took care of her, yet her husband (who may well have been respon-

sible for putting her in that condition) could starve her to death. How is this different from a woman murdering her baby by abortion out of convenience?

It would have been far more humane to blow Terri's brains out with a shotgun, but *that* would be murder. What's the difference?

—Alexander Davidson
Charleston, WV

Dr. Fleming Replies:

Hard cases proverbially make bad law, and it is unfortunate that Christian conservatives have attempted to make a general moral law out of the poor materials provided by the case of the unfortunate Mrs. Schiavo. There are four basic elements of the question: the fact of her medical condition; the laws of Florida and the United States; the relative rights of spouses, parents, and governments over life-and-death decisions; and Christian moral teachings.

On the question of fact, medical examination before and after Mrs. Schiavo's death pointed to an extreme loss not only of brain function but of the brain itself. We must either accept the evidence or believe that all the physicians and lab technicians were part of a conspiracy. And, if we are not to believe them, whose testimony are we to accept? The only answer is no one's, which puts the discussion outside the bounds of reason and science.

On the legal question, there is no serious dispute. The laws of the state of Florida were carried out. Good laws or bad, it is not up to private citizens to violate those laws, and, if the medical evidence is to be believed, those who attempted illegally to provide water would have caused the immediate death of the patient. Under the U.S. Constitution, even in its currently dilapidated condition, the Supreme Court has no jurisdiction over such a case. Michael Schiavo's decision may well have been immoral, but, in Florida, it was his legal right to make.

If not the husband, then who does have such a right? The parents who had previously agreed that she was in a persistent vegetative state and told Mr. Schiavo he should be dating other women? Such a position goes entirely against the Christian view of marriage, though it is consistent with a Roman father's right (in some cases) to kill his daughter and her lover,

if they commit adultery under his roof. That is the only application of the *patria potestas* relevant to this case.

What about the Supreme Court, the President, or a panel of "experts"—the same politicians and professionals who have legalized homosexuality and abortion on demand? Are we to give them explicit power over life and death?

Many extravagant things have been written about what constitutes "ordinary means." Until a generation ago, family members, in making a decision, had to consider whether any recovery was possible. (In this case, the husband was told it was not.) They also had to consider the nature of the means used to prolong life. Food and water, administered in the normal manner, were obviously normal, while means that artificially keep the lungs breathing and the heart pumping were not. Artificial means are obviously necessary in emergencies and as part of a program to maintain life in the expectation of recovery. They are just as obviously cruel and unnecessary when there is no such hope. Michael Schiavo may be a thoroughly bad man, though evidence provided by his in-laws, who had originally cooperated with him in his unjust suit against his wife's fertility doctor, is necessarily suspect. He may be a weak man who made a bad decision. Or he might have done the right thing. I have discussed this case at length with two serious old-fashioned priests as well as with serious-minded Protestant and Catholic laymen who understand their traditions. All of them concluded that, on the basis of the evidence presented, Michael Schiavo's decision was morally defensible.

In considering this and similar painful cases, we do well to recall that the Scriptures and the Christian tradition have taught us to regard this mortal life as a time of trial that prepares us for eternity. One way or another, Mrs. Schiavo would be dead before too long. So will I. In the meantime, conservative Christians persist in their dangerous delusion that the United States is a Christian nation that will soon come to its senses by passing legislation in conformity with Christ's moral teachings. This means, inevitably, that they are willing to strengthen the control of Caesar in exactly those areas of life where Caesar's hand should never intrude. Socialist revolutions have always aimed at either eliminating or minimizing the significance of marriage and the family. Too often, it seems, they have found allies on the Christian right.

A Better Way

On April 14, the front-page headline of *USA Today* read, "More say U.S. focus should be home." The story cited a *USA Today*/Gallup poll that found that nearly half of Americans thought the United States "Should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own."

Similarly, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story decrying U.S. isolationist and protectionist trends.

Did the readers of these articles stop to think about the fact that no one is really in favor of the type of isolation or protection the critics imply? No one wants to throw up walls around the United States or stop all foreign trade and commerce.

Our interventionist foreign policies, however, have produced more anti-Americanism than any isolationist could ever have caused. Back in 2002, William Schneider, in the *National Journal* (December 21), wrote:

Throughout the Middle East, anti-Americanism has grown along with U.S. influence . . . The United States is in a stronger position strategically and a weaker position politically. The lesson: great power breeds great resentment.

His words are even truer today, except that they apply all over the world and not just in the Middle East.

Our internationalist trade policies have killed more U.S. industries and have resulted in more lost jobs than anything any protectionist could ever have done. Even the neoconservative Ben Stein, in a recent column about the bankruptcy of Delphi, wrote:

It is a big company and its death knell tolls a whole new sad day for the American worker. Free trade is great for college professors and consumers. It is a stone killer for workers, and I feel badly for them.

Because we have sent so many millions of good jobs to other countries over the last several years, huge numbers of young people are now working as waiters and waitresses, going to graduate school, de-

laying the inevitable. Many—even those who hold advanced degrees—are finding the good jobs are simply not there. A young man who holds a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt recently visited my office; he works as a cook in one of Knoxville's finer restaurants.

In mid-March, I spoke at a Development Districts of Appalachia meeting in a hotel near Reagan National Airport to a crowd of 300 attendees, including government officials from 13 states, from New York down to Georgia. When I said that the first obligation of the U.S. Congress is to the American people, I was interrupted by applause. No matter what the audience, this is the reaction I always get when I say we should start putting our own people first.

Today, you are labeled an isolationist if you opposed the war in Iraq, even though it was a very unnecessary war that has become one of the biggest foreign-policy mistakes in U.S. history.

Conservatives used to believe in balanced budgets and fiscal prudence and used to oppose deficit spending. Now, some conservatives will label you as an isolationist if you believe that a nation that is over \$8 trillion in debt should never have spent \$300 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan, as we have over the last three years.

You are considered a terrible protectionist if you are upset about our \$700 billion trade deficit or all the jobs we have sent to other countries. And you are considered a protectionist if you think it is unfair for foreign governments to take over our ports or for foreign businesses to get our most lucrative government contracts when those same foreign countries will not allow Americans to compete fairly or control businesses in their countries.

There is a better way. It is not the ridiculous isolationism or protectionism critics scornfully and sarcastically describe.

Nor is it the no-borders global intervention of the neocons. And it is certainly not a weak-kneed trade policy that lets the Chinese and others do anything they want while killing off one U.S. industry after another.

The better way is to have trade and tourism and cultural and educational exchanges with the countries that treat us fairly, and to help them out during humanitarian crises. This would mean renegotiating trade agreements with any country with which our trade gets seriously out of balance. We need to insist that, if we are to do business and trade with them, they need to find something they can buy from us.

The better way—indeed, the best way—would be a return to America-first policies, in both trade and foreign relations. This means kicking our habit of intervening in so many religious, ethnic, and political disputes around the world—a habit that has caused so much resentment toward the United States. We could still maintain the strongest military in the world, with a much smaller price tag, if we stuck to genuine national defense.

This better way would mean a foreign policy of friendship toward all countries, without calling for yearly expenditures of hundreds of billions of dollars that we do not have. And it would mean taking positions of enlightened neutrality toward foreign disputes that are really none of our business. And it would mean trade policies that show at least a little concern for, and support of, American companies and American workers.

Obviously, this is not the neoconservative way, or that of big-government conservatism (if there really is such a thing). This is traditional conservatism, or what we used to call the American way.

Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr.,
represents Tennessee's 2nd District.

Save a Stamp!

E-mail your letters to the editor to:

polemics@chroniclesmagazine.org

THE FBI's most recent Ten Most Wanted List was published on May 6. In this, the fifth year of our Global War on Terror, it may come as a surprise to some that the latest addition to the list isn't a terrorist or even a murderer, but Warren Jeffs, the leader of a bizarre sect, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), whose members have lived more or less peacefully in obscure corners of Utah and Arizona since the 1930's, practicing the polygamy abandoned by the Mormons in 1890. Jeffs' alleged crimes? "[A]rranging a marriage in 2002 between a 28-year old man and a 16-year old girl" and "unlawful flight to avoid prosecution."

Americans might wonder how this desperado ended up on the Ten Most Wanted List, but they probably know more about Jeffs than about any other outlaw on that list—except Osama bin Laden. Jeffs has since been the subject of an episode of *Larry King Live*, another prime-time CNN special by Anderson Cooper, a breathless report on NPR, and over 600 additional reports in other media outlets.

The reason Jeffs is on the FBI's list has little to do with his alleged crimes—even serial child molesters never receive the national publicity Jeffs has—but with his views. Jeffs had been targeted by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which named the FLDS a "hate group" in May 2005. Of course, the SPLC highlighted Jeffs' views on race, noting in a 2005 report that Jeffs "teaches his followers that blacks are the descendants of Cain, 'cursed with a black skin' and selected by God to be 'the servants of servants.'" (This, like Jeffs' view on polygamy, is derived from traditional Mormon doctrine, abandoned by the LDS church in these latter days.) Although there is no evidence that the FLDS has ever done anything to blacks except say harsh things about them in the confines of its lonely desert outposts, the publicizing of its views had the predictable effect of bringing it to the attention of the government. When the group contemplated a move to Eldorado, Texas, the local paper, the *Eldorado Success*, reported that Texas Rep. Harvey Hildebran "introduced legislation targeting the FLDS" and cited Hildebran as saying that "It is saddening that there are people in the world

who can hold such xenophobic beliefs." The paper also interviewed FBI Agent Bill Endorff, who told it "that the FBI routinely tracks hate groups" and "said that he was aware that the FLDS church would appear on the SPLC watch list." One can only imagine J. Edgar Hoover's reaction upon learning that the FBI is now following the lead of Morris Dees' fundraising apparatus.

The SPLC objects to more than Jeffs' *outré* views on race, noting in its report that the women of the FLDS are "Clad in frocks and simple dresses" and "appear trapped in an endless episode of 'Little House on the Prairie.'" The SPLC lamented that the drugstore in the FLDS's hometown was "devoid of condoms but offers \$1.00 ovulation testing and free popcorn." (The popcorn undoubtedly had butter and salt, too.) The report also claimed that "Mental illness among the women of Short Creek is common," a result, no doubt, of "relentless pressure to produce as many children as possible."

On its website, the SPLC highlights Jeffs' claim that homosexuality is "the worst evil act you can do, next to murder" and has an audio file in which you can hear Jeffs advise wives to "Turn to [your husband] with a full heart and give him the opportunity to lead you right." Most of the media reports on Jeffs have also focused on his views on wives submitting to their husbands.

To be sure, all the evidence suggests that Jeffs is a typical cult leader, an egomaniac who ruthlessly exploits his followers and inculcates bizarre and even reprehensible beliefs. But there is no doubt that the SPLC and its media friends would view someone advising that "Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord" and that "A woman must receive instruction silently and under complete control" the same way they view Warren Jeffs. Saint Paul has not yet ended up on the SPLC Watch List, but anyone who takes his words literally risks being branded a hate criminal.

The evidence also indicates that Jeffs broke the law in arranging polygamous marriages for the members of his cult. But Jeffs' actions in marrying off his isolated desert followers posed far less of a threat to the institution of marriage or the rule of law than did the spectacular law-breaking of San Francisco mayor Gavin

Newsom, who illegally issued nearly 4,000 marriage licenses to homosexual couples in 2004. Despite his studied defiance of the law and open contempt for Western tradition, no one ever suggested that Newsom be placed on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List. And, if anyone had suggested that, he would have generated the sort of publicity that would have increased his chance of joining Warren Jeffs on the Ten Most Wanted List, ahead of the myriad criminals who menace ordinary Americans but do not violate any of the increasingly numerous strictures of political correctness.

—Tom Piatak

PORTER GOSS wasn't in a mood to discuss his May 5 departure from his post as CIA director after only two years on the job. Following the announcement of his resignation, Goss cryptically told reporters that his leaving was "just one of those mysteries." Indeed, it was—neither Goss nor President Bush was in a hurry to explain the change. (The President nominated Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden as Goss's replacement; Hayden was confirmed by the Senate in late May.) President Bush stated simply that the former congressman and intelligence officer had offered his resignation and the White House had accepted it. The President praised Goss, opining that "Porter's tenure at the CIA was one of transition, where he's helped his agency become integrated into the intelligence community . . . that was a tough job, and he's led ably."

Indeed, Goss seems to have been dispatched to the CIA to "integrate" the agency into a system that would crank out "intelligence" custom fit to the White House's policy choices. During his time at the CIA, Goss conducted a purge of personnel the White House saw as disloyal—especially critics of the Iraq war. The purge was simultaneously blended into the White House spin machine's CIA "intelligence failure" myth, with Goss portrayed as the hero dispatched to cleanse the Augean stables at the agency's McLean, Virginia, headquarters.

Early on in Goss's tenure, he made his intentions plain in a memo to agency employees: "We support the administration and its policies in our work," Goss wrote,

and “we do not identify with, support, or champion opposition to the administration or its policies.” Though the memo stated that intelligence officers should “let the facts” speak to policymakers, it seems clear that Goss intended to chill dissent. One agency official said at the time that “the word is out: The place is under lockdown.”

As *Chronicles* readers are aware, the Bush administration attempted to pressure CIA analysts to produce evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, as well as of connections between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network. When nothing convincing materialized, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his neoconservative allies set up the Office of Special Plans (OSP), a Pentagon office connected to a similar operation in Israeli intelligence. The OSP became the War Party’s chief weapon in the intelligence battle, giving information of questionable reliability to the hawks. The hawks then used that information to pressure CIA analysts who had remained skeptical of the Pentagon’s claims about Iraqi WMDs and alleged connections to Al Qaeda. The White House, admittedly with the help of certain compliant CIA officials—especially former CIA Director George Tenet—was then able to get the results it wanted. Later, the CIA was set up to take the fall for its alleged “intelligence failure” as it became apparent that Iraq had no WMDs and had not taken part in any Al Qaeda plotting.

So why did Goss, who had done such yeoman service in promoting the administration’s Iraq war, resign? White House spin doctors attempted to portray the firing as evidence of friction between Goss and “intelligence czar” John Negroponte, whose office had taken over some of the CIA’s functions—a plausible explanation, and probably partly true. Another story had Goss’s departure as part of a general administration shake-up that started with the resignation of Andrew Card as White House chief of staff and his replacement by Joshua Bolten. Other changes included Scott McClellan being replaced by commentator Tony Snow as White House press secretary, and Karl Rove (who has kept his deputy chief of staff job) losing his policy-coordination job to Joel Kaplan. Again, the story was plausible and probably contained a grain of truth.

But a scandal over the awarding of government contracts may be at the center of the Goss resignation story. As Goss de-

parted the CIA, media sources reported that his deputy, Kyle “Dusty” Foggo, was leaving as well. Foggo, it turns out, was the subject of an FBI investigation involving an associate of former U.S. Rep. Randall “Duke” Cunningham. Cunningham, a Republican from California, was sentenced to over eight years in prison for taking \$2.4 million worth of bribes (including homes and yachts) for ensuring that certain parties were awarded government contracts.

The story behind the Goss resignation began to trickle out. Foggo was a friend of one Brent Wilkes, a defense contractor (and later, an unindicted Cunningham coconspirator) who threw lavish poker parties—some of them at Washington’s landmark Watergate hotel—for his friends, including Foggo and, perhaps, Goss. Apart from a poker game, Wilkes may have provided his buddies with prostitutes. Like Foggo, Goss is known to have a taste for pricey cigars and poker. One former CIA official told journalists that Goss “had a relationship with Dusty and with Brent Wilkes” and that Goss attended Foggo’s parties. According to subsequent media accounts, Foggo may soon be indicted for steering government contracts to his poker pals. The *New York Daily News*, for instance, reported that the FBI was investigating the awarding of a CIA contract worth three million dollars to Wilkes. (The contract was for supplying bottled water, among other things, to CIA personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq.)

So far, no evidence implicating Goss in anything illegal has emerged—and it could be that his bureaucratic rival Negroponte used the poker party/Foggo story to force Goss out of the CIA. Or perhaps the Bush administration, already reeling as the President’s poll numbers were plummeting, simply engaged in the time-honored Washington game of CYA, pushing Goss out, evidence or no. One congressional source (cited in the *New York Daily News* item) claimed that “the administration may be on the verge of a major scandal.” But after the stories of the mythical Saddam connection to September 11, the invisible Iraqi WMDs, and the politically motivated “purge” at the CIA, what could possibly shock us about this shameless administration?

—Allen Dennis

VIOLENCE IN IRAQ has escalated, following the February 22 attack on the

revered Shiite shrine al-Askari in Samarra. Some 200 Sunni and Shiite mosques were attacked, burned, or bombed in the two-month period after the attack. The weekly toll of explosions, retaliatory attacks, and targeted killings has prompted many commentators to describe the chaotic conflict as a “civil war.”

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, under renewed pressure for the U.S. military’s lack of progress or an exit strategy, rejected this designation. He claimed that many reports of violence were “exaggerated” and accused the media of giving heart to the terrorists and discouraging those who hope for success.

At the opposite end of the political spectrum, commentators in the Arab world accused the United States of surreptitiously fomenting sectarian violence in order to have a reason for an extended military presence. “Claims that Iraq is about or has already fallen into a civil war benefits [sic] the occupation hugely,” opined Al Jazeera on April 21. It quoted veteran British reporter Robert Fisk as saying that Iraq is not a sectarian but a tribal society, yet “somebody,” nevertheless, is trying to provoke a civil war: “The real question I ask myself is: who are these people . . . ? Now the Americans will say it’s Al Qaeda, it’s the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do, the occupation authorities.”

Both Rumsfeld and Fisk are wrong.

To the former, misrepresenting Iraq, by now, comes naturally. Before the war, Rumsfeld was persistent in advancing two false claims: the supposed threat of Saddam’s supposed weapons of mass destruction and Iraq’s alleged links to the September 11 attacks. He claimed that U.S. troops would be greeted as liberators. He trusted the unsavory Ahmad Chalabi. He hoped that an occupation force many times lighter than that recommended by his generals would be able to occupy, secure, and defend Iraq after the war.

Rumsfeld’s current claim that the situation in Iraq is not as bad as that presented by the media is belied by his own officials, who use helicopters to get from the airport to the fortified American compound in the center of Baghdad rather than risk driving 12 miles on the best-guarded road in the Middle East. It is belied by the mass exodus of the remnant of the Chris-

tian community, by armed *ad hoc* militiamen who guard exposed Sunni and Shiite neighborhoods and sites, and by the fact that, as of this writing, over 1,000 Iraqi civilians are dying a violent death each month.

In Iraq, "civil war" may be an incorrect designation only in a technical sense—*i.e.*, for reasons that made that term inapplicable to America's experience of 1861-65. If we take the view that Iraq's Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds do not share a sense of a single collective identity or a commitment to a single Iraqi polity, what is emerging might more properly be called the War Between the Communities. But a "war" it most assuredly is, Secretary Rumsfeld's objections notwithstanding.

Robert Fisk is wrong in suspecting that the United States is fomenting that war, not because the U.S. government is necessarily loath to engage in such heinous practices but because it is too inept to do so effectively and without detection. *Divide et impera* demands a self-confident imperial mind-set, a cool head, and a knack for intricate planning that, at their respective peaks, characterized Roman and Byzantine prefects and British district commissioners. Today's benevolent

global hegemonists are clumsy plodders, by comparison.

The reason U.S. troops prefer not to get involved even when their nominal Shiite partners use state resources to escalate sectarian violence is more banal: They have no choice. Seriously confronting Shiite militias, such as the Iranian-connected al-Badr, which have successfully infiltrated Iraq's police and security apparatus, would be too costly for the undermanned occupation force. For U.S. commanders and policy planners, it is enough of a headache to ponder the attitude of Iraq's Shiites—more than two thirds of the country's 25 million people—if Iran's nuclear installations are eventually bombed, and if Iran retaliates by all means military, economic, and political that she can deploy.

For many regional analysts, that question is not "if" but "when." They do not doubt the ability of this administration to get involved in situations it can neither resolve nor control. If it decides to take on President Ahmadinejad, the global consequences cannot be predicted. In Iraq, they will ensure that the spring of 2006 will not be remembered as much of a "war" after all.

—Srdja Trifkovic

OBITER DICTA: With this issue, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture* by presenting you with a special 68-page issue that includes contributions by all of our regular columnists. For 30 years, we have fought the Culture War, and, thanks to your continued loyalty, we will continue the fight for another 30 years—and more.

Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George currently resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and his son, William.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson.** Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

Additional interior art is provided by **Elizabeth Wolf** and **Nicholas Garrie.** Miss Wolf received her B.F.A. from the School of Art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and resides in Chicago. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

The Morality of Everyday Life: Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.

"No more important book has been published in this new century."

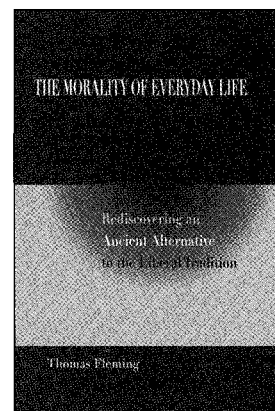
—E. Christian Kopff
The American Conservative

"Crisp and spellbinding . . . [T]he antidote to the stifling, suffocating, corrosive banality of modern culture and politics."

—Paul Likoudis
The Wanderer

"Writing much more accessibly and knowledgeably than most modern professional philosophers, Fleming revivifies the body of thought with which civilization was created and without which it is disintegrating."

—Ray Olson
Booklist



Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

Hardcover Price \$49.95
(\$44.95 + \$5.00 shipping and handling)

Violent Revolution

This past spring, while Congress was engaging in its usual mock debate about tightening immigration, hundreds of thousands of Mexican-Americans took their case to the streets. In the first round of demonstrations, Chicanos, waving Mexican flags, demanded rights for illegals and declared that all those who favored enforcing the law were racists.

We all heard and read the same arguments. Mexicans make an indispensable contribution to the American economy, yet they are treated with disrespect and hostility. The same propaganda appeared in the Mexican press. It had a common source: the speeches of President George W. Bush, who has been widely cited in Mexico as an advocate for the illegals.

Although conservative commentators criticized the demonstrators, they were far more hard on the members of Congress who wanted to criminalize illegal entry into the United States. Across the country, however, rank-and-file conservatives and even some liberals deluged talk radio and newspaper editorial pages with complaints. "Doesn't anybody care," argued the conservatives, "that illegal aliens are in fact *illegal*?" Between the rhetoric of the demonstrators and the rhetoric of their critics, there was and is a broad gap. Part of the gap is the result of the basic disagreement of the two sides; part of it derives from the different loyalties of the two groups—conservatives to their vision of "America the way it oughta be," and the Latinos to their Mexican-American identity. But just as apparent in the attitudes of the two groups was a divergent approach to legal and political questions. For the conservatives, the value of law and order and the U.S. Constitution is taken for granted, like the self-evident truths proclaimed in the Declaration. For the Mexicans, loyalty to family and nation, love and honor, seemed to take precedence over the conservatives' 18th-century abstractions.

Every Mexican-rights group complains about the racism and bigotry of Anglo-Americans, and their complaints are not without justification. Whatever we may say in public, most of us do not much like Mexicans, whom we regard as too irrational, too violent, too passionate.

Americans are hardly unique in having ethnic prejudices. There has probably never been a time in human history when members of different ethnic groups respected each other. Greeks despised Romans as crude; Romans despised Greeks as effeminate; and the French and English, many centuries later, played out the same little drama of chauvinism and contempt. A people defines itself, in part, by rejecting the qualities it attributes to foreigners. Anglo-Americans display their respect for cleanliness, self-restraint, and lawfulness by deriding Mexicans as dirty, violent, and lawless. And Mexicans return the compliment, making fun of *gringos* as stiff, unspiritual, and sexless.

The *gringo* stereotype is not restricted to ignorant peasants who have never met educated Americans. Carlos Fuentes, Mexico's most important novelist, has spent a great deal of time in America and speaks excellent English. Although Fuentes has picked up many American friends and admirers, his fiction still perpetuates the familiar self-serving stereotypes and clichés. In *The Old Gringo*, the old American (Ambrose Bierce) is a joyless writer who comes to Mexico seeking a beautiful death; the lovely American schoolmarm, whose family has lived the lie of respectability, only finds erotic fulfillment in the embrace of a peasant who has become one of Pancho Villa's officers. Colonel Arroyo feels he can share his deepest feelings with the *gringuita*, because she is

from a land as far away and strange as the United States, the Other World, the world that is not Mexico, the foreign and distant and curious, eccentric, and marginal world of the Yankees who did not enjoy good food or violent revolution or women in bondage, or beautiful churches, and broke with all traditions just for the sake of it, as if there were good things only in the future and in novelty . . .

Since the frontier between Mexico and the United States is moving ever northward, the best snapshot of the American future can be taken in the series of fron-



tier towns that ring the border. From the West, where San Diego—epitome of American opulence and consumerism—is faced by tacky and squalid Tijuana, which every year launches tens of thousands of illegal immigrants into California's underground labor markets; to El Paso and Juárez, a common city divided by historical conflicts and a border that is more irritating than relevant; to Del Rio and Acuña, Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, McAllen and Reynosa, Brownsville and Matamoros, America and Mexico are redefining themselves and each other in a cultural equivalent of Spanglish.

Mexico and the United States are both known as violent countries, but there are important differences in the style—and the incidence—of criminal violence. Both are complex countries with varying ethnic and regional traditions. For example, the states of the American South are proverbial for their high homicide rates, but, in contrast with the large cities of the North, much of the killing in the South is done for personal motives. Crimes of violence in the United States can also be broken down by ethnicity: Blacks and Hispanics account for well over half the violent crimes, while the rate for white Americans is in line with those in Western Europe.

In 1999, the U.S. homicide rate was 5.7 per 100,000. This is two to eight times the rate of most countries in Western Europe, but America seems safe when compared with Mexico, which, despite very strict gun laws, has a homicide rate of 17.58. According to the Overseas Security Advisory Council, "In the categories of murder, rape and robbery, Mexico's Distrito Federal posts 3 to 4 times the incidence of these crimes than does New York City, greater Los Angeles or Washington, D.C."

What this means when Mexicans en-

ter the United States can be measured by Ed Rubenstein's calculations in an important article on *VDare.com*: In 2003, while about 27 percent of the inmates in federal prisons were aliens, 67 percent of that figure were Mexican—or 18 percent of the total prison population. When other Latin Americans were added in, the Latino percentage of the federal prison population reached 23 percent. These aliens are very costly to feed, house, and protect, but since most (as Rubenstein points out) are repeat offenders, they cost taxpayers less in prison than on the outside.

In Europe, America is condemned as a nation of homicidal cowboys, but, as Roger McGrath has shown in his classic *Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes*, the well-armed Old West was a peaceful place. The old America had her share of tough-guy heroes, but, for the most part, they did their own killing in what were regarded as fair fights. Men such as Jim Bowie and even John Wesley Hardin did not have men shot in the back, seal off trains in tunnels by dynamiting both sides, or terrorize whole towns—some of Pancho Villa's more notorious escapades.

Mexico and the United States share a reputation for political violence, but, while America's ill fame rests largely on four assassinated presidents and several well-publicized riots and police crackdowns (Haymarket Riot, Kent State, the 1968 Democratic Convention), Mexican history is awash in blood. Among the more famous political killings in Mexico, one might name the last two Aztec rulers, Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc; the two clerical leaders of uprisings against Spain (Father Hidalgo and Father Morelos); emperors Agustín de Iturbide and Maximilian; presidents Madero, Carranza, and Obregón—to say nothing of a more recent string of high-profile killings that includes a Catholic cardinal murdered by drug lords in Guadalajara in 1993; a PRI presidential candidate (Luis Donaldo Colosio) in 1994; a PRI secretary general and majority leader-elect of the lower house (José Francisco Ruíz Massieu) killed by the brother of President Salinas in 1994; a congressman implicated in drugs and murder (Manuel Muñoz Rocha).

These few names do not begin to exhaust a very long list that includes rival political candidates murdered by the PRI, journalists killed by drug lords, thousands of students gunned down in demonstrations (in 1968 and 1971), and the massive suppression of the Chiapas Indians

in the 1990's.

The most celebrated victims of political violence were the two outstanding military leaders of the Mexican Revolution, Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa. General Villa is one of the most remarkable men produced by Mexico. A reckless and daring cavalryman, he was nicknamed the "Centaur of the North" for his exploits in the saddle. He and his lieutenants also acquired an unsavory reputation for cruelty. Even before Woodrow Wilson decided to recognize Villa's rival Venustiano Carranza as the legitimate president of Mexico, Villa had made a habit of killing *gringos*. Outraged by what he regarded as American treachery, he launched a punitive expedition against the people of Columbus, New Mexico. Villa's men killed about 18 Americans, mostly civilians, but they would have killed many more, had they not been distracted by looting.

Despite his many acts of wanton killing, including (perhaps) the murder of Ambrose Bierce, Villa is unquestionably a great hero in his own country. In Chihuahua, his house has been turned into a museum of the revolution, and, although the cruelty of his lieutenant Fierro is several times mentioned, the general of the Division of the North is treated with the respect he demanded in life.

There is no hero quite like "Pancho" Villa in American history. To match his career, one would have to combine the cavalry exploits of Bedford Forrest with Andrew Jackson's harsh temper and the postwar activities of the Jameses and Youngers, but this hybrid would still lack Villa's homicidal volatility.

Our mass killers are of a different stamp from either American gunfighters or Mexican bandit-revolutionaries: Villa was unquestionably brave and resourceful, admirable in his own way. Our homicidal maniacs are respectable men such as William Tecumseh Sherman and the president who sent him on his mission, and Harry S. Truman, who dropped the big ones—not on the Japanese politicians and officers who deserved it, but on civilians. Ours are men with clean hands who kill with a few words.

When reporters began grilling Donald Rumsfeld about possible war crimes and abuses, his stock response was that "we don't do those things." Indeed, Abu Ghraib probably is exceptional. Nonetheless, the United States government has an appalling record of what would be called war crimes if they were commit-

ted by any other nation. To name only a few examples of war against civilians: the conquest of the Philippines; the bombing of Belgrade and Novi Sad; and the burning of Columbia, South Carolina. Who knows what decent people will say of the nearly one million civilian deaths attributed to the Gulf War and subsequent embargo, or the total mess we have made of Iraq over the past three years?

American violence was summed up for me by the words of a little girl playing fire-control officer on a submarine during the bombing of civilian centers in Yugoslavia. She explained to the cameras that she just sent the missiles and did not think about where they landed. Judges and politicians display a similar insouciance in not thinking about the tens of millions of infants murdered with their permission. Mexican-American immigrants, by contrast, are generally more pro-life than American natives, and some even refused to vote for their would-be Democratic *patrón*, John Kerry, because of his outspoken support for a woman's right to kill her child.

Some American Catholics think we should welcome the hordes of pro-life Catholics swarming across our southern border, but this is a mistake. Mexicans quickly become acclimated to America's culture of consumerism and infanticide. What they do not appear to relinquish is their own traditional style of violence.

Unfortunately, Americans, who have lost faith in their traditions and in their God, are as likely to resist the invasion from the south as they are to combat Islamic terrorism. Liberal to the core, we lack the most basic survival instincts. Nearly five years after September 11, our leaders still think they are "fighting terrorism" in Iraq, while they are refusing either to defend our borders or to contain the spreading virus of Islam in our society.

Many Mexican immigrants know who they are. They can name their grandparents; they love their country; and, in their own passionate way, they worship their God and love their Church. If you attack what they love, some Mexicans, instead of acknowledging your right to disagree, just give you a taste of rough justice. If only we could convince them that their real enemies are the Muslims who have slandered Our Lord and His Mother. Then they could fight the battle we are afraid to fight, and, when they have reconquered North America, they would have earned it. 

The Saint of the Sourdoughs

More than 20 years ago, I presented a paper on the Old West at an historical conference and was surprised to find that I upset several female professors in the audience. I had not disparaged their frontier sisters. Quite the opposite: I described how strong, courageous, enterprising, and successful were many of those pioneer women. The professors in question did not want to hear that. They wanted me to describe the women on the frontier as oppressed, brutalized, raped, victimized—by white males, of course. That is not what I found, however. Not only were there countless numbers of inspiring women on the frontier, but the respect given to them—by white males—was virtually universal and omnipresent. Account after account, by the women themselves, by men, by travelers of all sorts, by foreign correspondents, all mention the deference paid to women on America's many frontiers. The life of Nellie Cashman, known as the Frontier Angel or the Saint of the Sourdoughs, is but one testament to the courageous women who helped make America's conquest of the West our Homeric era and who, in turn, received the utmost respect.

Born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1844, Nellie lived up to her surname, which in its Gaelic form—O'Ciosain—comes from a root word meaning "tribute" or "rent." She would spend much of her time in the West running her own boardinghouses—and collecting rent. Arriving in America with the Civil War raging, she found work as a bellhop in a hotel. Not many bellhops looked like Nellie, a beautiful and delicately featured young woman with waist-length brunette hair; flawless, fair skin; and sparkling, expressive eyes.

Following the Civil War, Nellie headed west by way of Panama. She stayed in San Francisco long enough to provide a residence for her mother and then was off for the mining camps of the Old West, whenever a new strike beckoned to the adventurous and hearty. In camp after camp, she established boardinghouses and restaurants, built them into profitable enterprises, sold out to later arrivals, and moved on. Any miner down on his luck ate for free at Nellie's, and Nellie

was always ready to grubstake a prospector. She also had a talent for medicine and nursed many an injured or ill miner back to health.

In 1874, she joined a party of 200 Nevada miners headed for the Cassiar Mountains in northern British Columbia. The region was practically unknown and all but inaccessible. Nonetheless, the miners—and Nellie—reached their goal, striking gold on the upper reaches of the Stikine River and along its major tributary, Dease Creek. As usual, Nellie established a boardinghouse and restaurant and did some mining herself.

It was only fall when winter came to the Cassiars. The miners were caught unprepared for the heavy snowfalls and severe cold. As their supplies dwindled, dozens began falling ill with scurvy. Their beloved Nellie was not among them, having gone "out to civilization" early in the fall for a vacation in Victoria. When word of the miners' predicament reached the city, Nellie purchased a ton of supplies, including plenty of lime juice, hired six men, and headed for Dease Creek. At Wrangel, Alaska, U.S. custom officers tried to dissuade her from what they termed a "mad trip." True to form, she pushed on. When the commander of Fort Wrangel heard that a woman was heading into the Cassiars, he dispatched a squad of soldiers to rescue her. They didn't catch up with her until high on the Stikine River. Nearly exhausted and suffering greatly from the cold, the soldiers found Nellie camped comfortably on the ice of the frozen Stikine, "cooking her evening meal by the heat of a wood fire and humming a lively air." The soldiers gratefully accepted her offer of hot tea and food and returned without her.

Upon hearing of Nellie's trek, the *Daily British Colonist* called it an "extraordinary feat" by an "indomitable female who . . . possesses all the vivacity as well as the push and energy inherent to her race." Nellie and her crew continued the journey on snowshoes and sleds, reaching the miners just in time to save them from dying of scurvy.

Nellie stayed in British Columbia long enough to erect a general store and raise money to build St. Joseph's Hospital in



Victoria. By 1880, she was operating the Russ House hotel and restaurant in Tombstone and rearing her sister's five children after both the sister and her husband had died. While in Tombstone, Nellie also established a fund for injured miners, saved a man from being lynched, and helped build the town's first school and first Catholic church, and the first hospital in Arizona, St. Mary's in Tucson. On a prospecting trip to Baja, she saved a party of miners from dying of thirst by crossing a blistering desert alone and finding an isolated mission.

When news of the great strike in the Klondike reached the states, Nellie was off for the Far North immediately. She climbed Chilkoot Pass, rode the rapids of the Yukon River to Dawson, and, by the summer of 1898, had opened a restaurant and grocery store. The store included a small library—the "Prospector's Haven of Rest"—where miners could read and write letters home. "Her entrance into a saloon or dance hall," reported a newspaper, "was the signal for every man in the place to stand." She continued living and prospecting in the Yukon and Alaska for another 30 years, once mushing a dog team across 700 miles of wilderness on a mission of mercy. Shortly before she died, a reporter asked her if she ever "feared for her virtue" while living in all-male mining camps or prospecting on wild frontiers. "Bless your soul, no!" she replied. "I never have had a word said to me out of the way. The 'boys' would sure see to it that anyone who ever offered to insult me could never be able to repeat the offense." 



The Big Word

What is *culture*, anyway? It's one of those baffling words that at first seem to mean a narrow range of things (stuff such as "grand opera") and then turn out to cover just about everything—even the *New York Post*, if you stretch it far enough. As with *art* and *history*, you may find yourself using the word without being too sure what you're talking about.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines *culture* as "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population." There. All clear? And that's just the primary meaning; eight others follow, some involving livestock and microorganisms, which perhaps needn't concern us here. But one of these eight others is "refinement of taste." This is the one we are invoking when we praise someone for being "cultured"; under the primary meaning, only an idiot could be called "uncultured." Even a toddler learning to talk is already being initiated into that "totality."

"My dear sir," Dr. Johnson told Boswell, "don't use big words for little matters." Well, when a word becomes *this* big, I start to wonder if we should use it at all. How did Johnson define it in his own dictionary? Alas, I've mislaid my copy, but, in the 18th century, it carried nothing like its current nebulous breadth of meaning. Johnson was notable for his succinct and manly definitions of even abstract words. His voice still booms off the page with a measured resonance as recognizable as the voice of his frankly sententious poetry.

Today, we speak all too readily of "modern culture," "culture wars," "multiculturalism," and "pop culture" (one of the latest variants is "culture of corruption"), but I never use these terms without a slight anxiety: What if some no-nonsense reader demands to know exactly what I mean? Do I really know? Instead of "culture," maybe I should speak specifically about languages, customs, morals, and, above all, religions.

Whenever I have one of these (frequent) attacks of big-word guilt, I ask myself a simple question: Did Shakespeare need this word, or did he get by without

it? After all, he had a pretty ample vocabulary, and he managed to express himself adequately on a wide range of topics.

Not that we must, should, or can confine ourselves to words Shakespeare used, but he does prove you can go far on just 20,000 of them if you have to. I merely say I'm wary of using too many expressions that might have puzzled earlier generations of English speakers.

Just as I thought. A quick check of the concordance shows that the great Bard never used the term *culture*, or even the cognate *cult*. So how would I say what I want to say on the subject in a way he might understand?

Be that as it may, one of my favorite magazines is E. Michael Jones' *Culture Wars*, a two-fisted orthodox Catholic monthly that never leaves me in doubt about what *it* means. It's frankly about religion, but that spills over into so many other things—politics, the sciences, music—that *Religious Wars* would be a misleading name for it.

Religion is at the heart of every culture, I suppose, and maybe a culture is the practical expression of a society's central beliefs in every detail. But then, "a society" and "beliefs" are also problematic terms; what "beliefs" does our officially godless "society" share?

Who got us all talking about "culture," anyway? I can't trace it beyond Matthew Arnold, not a conspicuously religious fellow, in *Culture and Anarchy*, who defined it with bold naiveté as "the best that has been thought and said." Best? Says who? Isn't that a "value judgment"?

Anyway, by the early 20th century the word had been picked up by nonjudgmental anthropologists (as in "Mayan culture"), by the very judgmental T.S. Eliot ("Notes Toward the Definition of Culture"), and by the mocking Ezra Pound (*Guide to Kulchur*). Are you as confused as I am? Of course you are, I think.

Pound defined a professor as "a man who is paid to talk for an hour." I defy you to top that. And, like *evolution*, *culture* is a



professorial word, a word that solicits the hypnotic nod. Say it, and the crowd hushes. The trouble is that its value-free definition can't shake off the honorific overtones of "refinement of taste." The mania for "multiculturalism" is fueled by egalitarian resentment: How dare we say that one culture is "better" than another?

Even President Bush, for whom the English language is a blunt instrument, feels he must walk on eggshells in this territory: Islam is a "religion of peace," just like Christianity, Judaism, whatever. Apparently *all* religions are, by their very nature, religions of peace, except when "hijacked" by "extremists." (Tell it to the Aztecs.)

Generally, *culture* is what modern Western man talks about when he feels uneasy talking about Christ, Christianity, or even religion. It's a huge stopgap, an evasion, a word that tries to do the work of older and more specific words. The moment we use it, we risk trapping ourselves into a hopelessly roundabout discussion of important things. And such a discussion usually winds up being confusing and meaningless, trailing off into "I think I see what you mean . . ."

Never mind Shakespeare; we don't find the word in translations of the Bible or ancient literature, either. Can this be why Saint Paul and Aristotle, for example, sound so vigorous, definite, free of any tendency to overstatement and woolgathering? The same can be said of such modern writers as Orwell and C.S. Lewis.

It pays to increase your word power, as we all know; and a good way to do this is to prune your vocabulary of inflated words. ◊

the Chronicles FilmLog

Now available at www.ChroniclesMagazine.org

Hollywood Blues

A Culture of Grand Illusions

by George Garrett

"A fact is not a truth until you love it."

—Shelby Foote

A while back, I wrote a piece for a *Festschrift* in honor of Walter Sullivan—*Place in American Fiction: Excursions and Explorations*. My piece, "Places We Have Come From, Places We Have Been," argued that my own fiction and poetry, like that of so many other Southern writers of my generation, inevitably included more places than only home bases and home places. I said that, to be honest, we must at least acknowledge the other places, foreign and domestic, that we had lived in and written about, using myself as an example: the academic world I had lived in to earn my keep, places such as Middletown, Connecticut; Rome, Italy; Houston, Texas; Miami, Florida; Columbia, South Carolina; Charleston, West Virginia; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Lexington and Charlottesville, Virginia. Not to mention other places where I lived for a time—York Harbor, Maine, and my days in Trieste (Free Territory of Trieste) and Linz, Austria, courtesy of the U.S. Army. I must also openly confess to having lived some time in New York City. I argued that, for a writer of my time and age, the Armed Services were a deeply rooted place, much the same in Trieste or Linz or anywhere, as well as an institution that we shared and a common memory. It now seems to me that my original piece is still unfinished, that there are other public places that have strongly influenced us, especially the Southern writers who are so often reputed to be (and maybe really are) especially sensitive to the nuances of place.

To begin, it seemed to me that I had inadvertently ignored one place that has had an overwhelming impact not only on a recent generation of writers but on that of the great masters (Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, etc.) who came before us. I am thinking of Hollywood. One cannot escape the impact and influence, the power and the glory, then, of Hollywood just by never having been there. And even if one freely elected to go there, one would inevitably find truth in the often quoted and misattributed remarks about the whole of Los Angeles, of which Hollywood was and is the mythic heart: "There is no there there." Hollywood was never there. It came to us, wherever we were, in Kissimmee, Florida, or Arab, Alabama, or Outer Mongolia. It came in those days cheaply—a nickel for me until I was 12 years old, when it suddenly doubled to an expensive dime.

Hollywood was, as it remains, a metaphor without a portfolio.

Contributing editor George Garrett is a novelist, poet, and the Henry Hoyns Professor of Creative Writing Emeritus at the University of Virginia. He was named the poet laureate of Virginia in 2002.

Southerners were often much involved in it, at least the art and craft of it, anyway, never really the corporate-studio business and money side, which was mostly barred to them, from the beginning. Southerner D.W. Griffith codified or invented the vocabulary, the language, the grammar, and the idiom of film. Behind the hoopla and dazzle, that basic grammar has not changed much since that time. Same old hand of cards to be played out. Cut and deal.

Southerners, including our greatest writer, William Faulkner, spent a lot of time and energy working as screenwriters. Southerners have continued to write for the movies; some people, such as James Lee Barrett, Horton Foote, and the late Calder Willingham and Terry Southern, with great success. Their experience has now become part of our experience, a part of our personal mythology. And some of the films based on the experience (history) of the South have been among the most successful of all time—*Birth of a Nation*, *Gone With the Wind*, among others.

Still, they (imaginary inhabitants and managers of this metaphorical home place called Hollywood) have never really understood or been much interested in the South, as we know it. They impose their own vision on our place, and we can take it or leave it. Because the movies are half magic, anyway, any particular place can be summoned up from almost anywhere else, far from the original. With a few little tricks of the trade, Southern California locations can serve just as well for the Mississippi Delta or ancient Rome. With the newest tools and toys such as digitalization, any place can be anywhere else at any time. Authenticity is, in the movies, what it has been from the beginning—a matter of smoke and mirrors, sleight of hand. Now you see it, now you don't.

As it happens, though—and, thus, appropriately becomes a part of this piece—I have been there myself, even lived there (months, though, not years) among them. I have worked as a screenwriter on several movies for several people and saw three of them turn from "property" into "product," which was then shown in theaters and for which people seem to have paid money to witness.

I went there, lived and worked among them for a while, in response to a number of vague impulses that I thought of at the time as good reasons: first, that I wanted to find out as much as I would be able to, to learn whatever could be learned from the practical experience of making a movie or two; second, the pay was good, not as extravagant as it is these days, but nevertheless more than generous by literary standards; third, because it was also a family matter. An uncle of mine, Oliver H.P. Garrett, my father's younger brother and my own godfather,

had lived and worked out there for more than 30 years. The best information I can come up with—and solid information about Hollywood's earlier years, up to the middle of the 20th century, is hard to come by—indicates that he is to be credited with at least 45 screenplays that were produced. Some of them are pretty good—*Dead Reckoning*, *A Farewell to Arms* (Gary Cooper and Helen Hayes), *The Hurricane*, *The Man I Married* (a.k.a. *I Married A Nazi*), *Manhattan Melodrama*, for which he shared an Oscar. That one is the gangster movie that aroused John Dillinger to come out of hiding to see it, whereupon he was gunned down by the FBI while leaving the theater with the infamous lady in red. There were a fair share of classic turkeys, too. Consider the John Barrymore (1930) version of *Moby Dick*, the one with a happy ending where they kill the bad white whale and then sail back to Nantucket to live happily ever after. Don't forget *Duel in the Sun* (a.k.a. *Lust in the Dust*) and the improbable adaptation of *Sanctuary* as *The Story of Temple Drake*. But don't fail to mention that his script, written in close coordination with production designer Cameron Menzies, was the final shooting script for *Gone With the Wind*. Uncle Oliver always interested me. He was a colorful and mysterious family presence. He had died almost a decade before I joined the ranks in Hollywood; but when I was out there, many people remembered him warmly and well and treated me kindly because of him.

When I worked there, I lived as simply and cheaply as I was able to, sometimes with friends, but more often in a cheap motel near the studio with the general aim of bringing home enough ill-gotten loot to justify the effort and my absence.

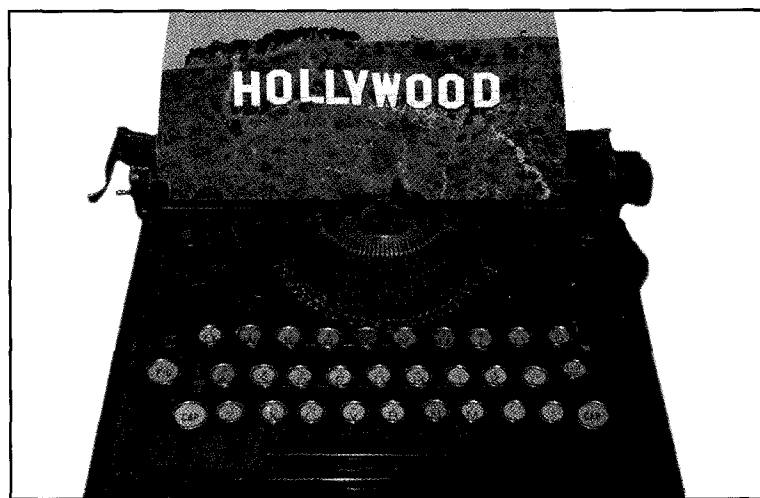
I went to see Oliver Garrett's old house, between owners at that time, a very large, rambling, eclectic mansion, an easy-going place, on a hill with tall old trees; and it was fully early Hollywood—a fine swimming pool, a tennis court, places where (I was told) people such as Chaplin and Garbo and a lot of the European contingent came regularly to relax. Oliver was away in the service during most of World War II, as he had been during World War I; otherwise, he made his home there. I could imagine him, a tall, handsome, and athletic man, on the courts or in the pool, and his glamorous, sometimes famous friends at play; but I did not feel any deep connection with the place. No sense of roots, either—not physically. To be and to feel rootless are part of the essential character of the place. Best I can make of it, many others who came and went to and from Hollywood felt pretty much the same way.

In some ways, Faulkner seems to have understood the place and the life better than most of the others, certainly better than most of us who came along afterward. He once told a younger writer (Shelby Foote), who was headed to Hollywood for gainful employment, "Don't take the work too seriously. Take those people very seriously." Best advice I can imagine.

I always wanted to write my very own "Hollywood novel," but I never quite got around to it. What became of the Hollywood experience (so far) has been a few fairly light and slight short stories; a poem or two, not really about Hollywood but about the movies; and a couple or three critical essays. I cannot recall working on or writing anything more, other than the screenplays I had been hired to do; but I must have brought along with me some early drafts of a novel set in a mountain town (roughly Spruce Pines and Burnsville conflated) in western Northern Carolina—*Do Lord, Remember Me*. I worked on that many evenings in my motel room, in my blessed spare time.

I was out there once during the brief days of what we have come to call the Cuban Missile Crisis—which, at the time and in that place, struck me as an elaborate publicity stunt perhaps scripted by somebody like Nathaniel West. I have not changed my mind. We were in production, shooting a movie at the moment. We had to stop everything, because our star vanished, fled into the desert to a secret cave he had prepared against the day of what was still called Atomic Warfare, before we established the cheery euphemism Nuclear Exchange. It took us a few days to find his lair.

Meantime, across the street from my motel was a large supermarket where crowds of agitated people of all kinds in all kinds of costumes and funny clothes came swarming to pick the place clean. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, not a single solitary thing—a pack of gum, or roll of toilet paper, a Scotch-tape dispenser, a can of sardines—left on the shelves by the end of the first day. A few days later, to be sure, the same folks came swarming back to life to try to return all their impulse purchases for refunds.



Melanie Anderson

A word of advice: Try not to be in Hollywood or the greater Los Angeles area if and when there is a Nuclear Exchange.

From those days, that time in the early 1960's, I keep only some stories in memory, unwritten stories, untold tales and anecdotes. I sometimes imagine my experience of Hollywood as one of those penny gum-ball machines, a multicolored cargo of little anecdotes...

Here are a couple of Carl Sandburg stories. Why not? The aforementioned James Lee Barrett, Southern screenwriter at large in Brentwood, young and gifted and lucky, was under contract, together with a cowriter, Carl Sandburg (yes), to write the script for the biblical epic, the grandiose and hugely expensive film *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Truth is, until very late in the process, Barrett never met Sandburg or read a word the poet had written on or about the script. Then, one fine day, Barrett was in his office at the studio typing up some additional dialogue for Jesus and the Disciples when he felt a presence behind him—somebody standing very close by, just over his right shoulder. He paused. A throat, not Barrett's, cleared itself. He slowly turned his swivel chair around. Found himself looking directly at the white-haired famous head and red face of Carl Sandburg. Sandburg raised his right arm, reached past Barrett, and pointed, with an emphatic tapping index finger, at the typed lines of dialogue on the paper.

"Son," Sandburg said. "That ain't the way the Lord talks."

Barrett glanced quickly at the page, ready to learn from the master how the Lord really does talk. Looked back to Carl Sandburg only to discover that the old poet had (done) gone, vanished into thin air.

Later, with his script behind him and with production in process, Barrett had a party in honor of his mysterious (and fabulously well-paid) collaborator, to which half the "hot" names of Hollywood were cordially invited. They came early and stayed late. So did the old poet. Came early and partied until around two in the morning. Sandburg was then about to leave. Barrett, thinking it would be a nice and easy way to end the whole affair and send them on their merry ways, asked Sandburg if he would be so kind as to favor them with a reading of one of his poems.

Could we say, then, that the triumph of Hollywood has been so complete that there is now an entertainment market for "reality" shows on television (in which, to be sure, the shows have a cast of characters and are "scripted" and then carefully edited)? One is told that a significant percentage of the viewing public believe that *The West Wing* was, in fact, our real federal government.

"Certainly, with pleasure," Sandburg said, producing a book from somewhere. The book was his celebrated book-length poem *The People, Yes*. He began with line one and read slowly and steadily and with feeling to the very last line, by which time dawn was breaking over Brentwood, and half the "hot" names of Hollywood were sound asleep, some snoring, on James Lee Barrett's living-room floor.

The subtext of the Hollywood story for American writers (and everybody else, as it happens) is somewhat less amusing. It tells us how this place, which is in truth no place like home, no "real" place at all, came to haunt our consciousness, meanwhile infecting our culture with the dread (venereal?) disease of celebrity and by plaguing us with doubts and skepticism concerning not just the validity but the *reality* of our own simple mundane experiences—one of which is, of course, a sense of place. We are invited to believe in the image and to

doubt the reality of everything else.

What once was "real" is now, more and more, a movie (or TV) set with actors performing there. It becomes somehow acceptable, anyway not obviously shameful, for our public figures to play assigned roles, to speak their scripted lines (sound bytes) and to "act out" their apparent concerns.

The culture of grand illusions, sparked and sponsored by the global powers of Hollywood, is everywhere around us. Anyone familiar with the Commonwealth of Virginia is well aware of the "edge cities" all around the dripping honeypot of our nation's capital, huge agglomerations of high-rise steel and concrete and glass where more and more people contrive to live. Places such as Tyson's Corner, itself (in my lifetime) with only a gas station or two then and, as I remember, a large general store. Traveling north or south on US-29, with our young children, we used to stop there for a Coke and to look at the shelves of junk in the store. These are now imaginary cities—movie sets.

I look at Faulkner's work, as I also look back at the last things by Fitzgerald, with an awareness that, in many ways, working for the movies and movie people served to free them up from many inherited inhibitions of the 19th-century novel as it was evolving. They learned new things that they could do with prose, things taken directly from the craft of making movies. Just so, they learned how to distinguish and define ways by which prose (or poetry), printed words on a page, can also do things well beyond the grace of cinematic art. And just so, all the writers that I know of, who have trailed the puissant pike among Hollywood's rabble of foot soldiers, have been changed and influenced, and not always for the ill, by the practical Hollywood experience.

Could we say, then, that the triumph of Hollywood has been so complete that there is now an entertainment market for "reality" shows on television (in which, to be sure, the shows have a cast of characters and are "scripted" and then carefully photographed and edited)? One is told (though one need not believe it) that a significant percentage of the viewing public believe that *The West Wing* was, in fact, our real federal government. Laugh tracks have all but replaced human laughter. Meanwhile, documentary films, acting on the honor system and given a pass for accuracy, create propaganda.

Since our ostensible subject is the influence of all this show business ("Hollywood") on American writers and writing, what can we say to that point? First, that the powerful and simplistic narratives of film and the routine way that, during the collaborative process of production, the basic elements of narrative are exploded (or imploded), then elaborately rearranged into new forms and structures, have radically changed our way of thinking about the creation of narratives in general. Writers of my generation have seen more movies than they have read the books that they ought to be reading. We, and the youngsters barking behind us, may or may not be more "visual" than earlier generations, but our way of telling a story in print is most often cinematic; or, by the same token, deliberately anticinematic.

It remains to be said that that same experience has, for better and worse, inspired maybe as many as a thousand "Hollywood novels" since the early days of *Tom Swift and His Wizard Camera* (1912). This, in turn, has morphed into a great many movies about movie making, some few of them—Fellini's *8 1/2*, *The Last Tycoon*, *Adaptation*, etc.—quite worthy and wonderful. But that is another story for another day. ◊

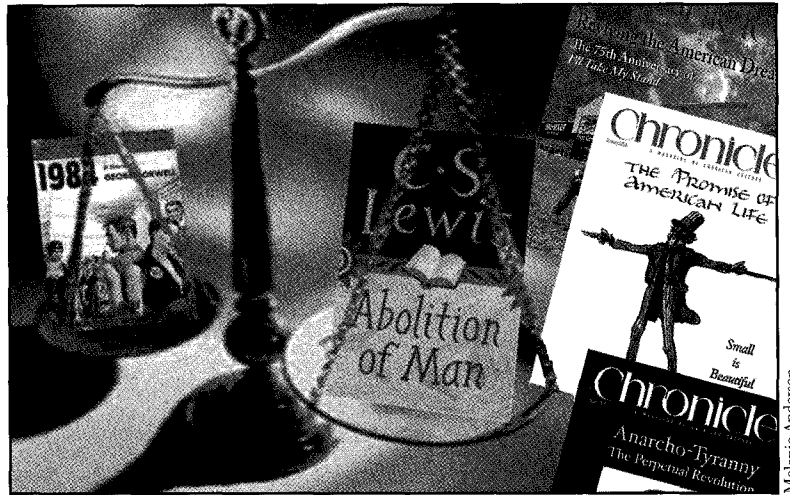
Culture War

Fighting On

by Clyde Wilson

*"Transcend yourself and join in the universal struggle
to bring about the self-transcendence of all men!"*

—Karl Marx



Culture, as the term is used in America in our times, covers a vast territory with ill-defined frontiers. There is primitive culture (flint spearheads, animal and human sacrifice). There is high culture (Shakespeare, Michelangelo). There is, or used to be, folk culture ("country music" before its commodification). There is a lowbrow culture (rap music, fraternity hazing, George W. Bush's oratory), and a middlebrow culture (Disney movies, the writings of William F. Buckley, Jr.). There is even a faux primitive culture surrounding the production and consumption of rock music. As always, it does us well to look at the origin of words. In this case, the origin is Latin, and, in early usage, the word was associated with *cult*, i.e., religion, and agriculture—religion and agriculture being the deeply intertwined and indispensable bases of civilization.

Nevertheless, in general public discourse, we know what we mean when we speak of "culture" without specificity. We mean the sum of material, social, instrumental, linguistic, and spiritual ideas, assumptions, customs, beliefs, values, tools, and behaviors that constitute a human community. A person without culture, in this sense, if such were possible, would scarcely be human. When we speak of the "culture war," we are postulating that we are in possession of a culture against which war is being made. We refer to a readily observable phenomenon—the relentless pounding that the American social fabric has endured for a half-century or more from many of its

members who wish to dissolve and transform it. If the defenders of American culture are to have any success, we have to be brutally frank with ourselves. The culture war is very much a civil war. The enemy is not at the gates; he is well ensconced in our temples and even makes himself free of our firesides.

We should always remember that the struggle is the "culture war" and not, as is sometimes said, the "culture wars." One reason the defenders of culture have had so little success is that we have been fighting a series of brushfire skirmishes instead of a war. The enemy is Legion, but he is also One. One of the enemy's most devastating and uncounterable weapons is the federal judiciary. False allies tell us we will win a victory by changing a few Supreme Court justices. This tactic is so plausible-sounding and so foolishly ineffective that it could only have been thought up by a politician. The real battle we need to arm ourselves for is the extinction of the usurpative, unconstitutional tyranny of judges over our life and culture—that is, we need to rid ourselves of craven obedience to evil and irresponsible power in high places.

The culture war is not of our choosing. We did not seek it or declare it. We really only wanted to be left alone to live by our patrimony in the normal human way. Many of us are even reluctant to admit that it is a concerted aggression and not just a series of accidental collisions. So we have been retreating steadily, and many of our troops have been routed or gone over to the enemy.

Perhaps we should remind ourselves of what we ought to be defending: a culture, which is the sum of the life of a com-

Contributing editor Clyde Wilson teaches history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Our struggle is the “culture war” and not, as is sometimes said, the “culture wars.”

One reason the defenders of culture have had so little success is that we have been fighting a series of brushfire skirmishes instead of a war.

munity and which contains all that is human. Its most important parts are the most intangible. What is threatened with destruction is the American form (however attenuated) of the substantive and positive side of what was once called Western civilization.

That culture reflects a vision of the nature of man and of his place in the universe without which we will cease to exist in any meaningful sense. C.S. Lewis laid out the whole question inimitably in *The Abolition of Man*. The vision is of man as an earthly creature, yet made in the image of something Higher,

each of us unique, with a divine spark and a free will. We are to be guided by reason (not rationalism), exercised in the light of transcendent values that we possess through Revelation, the wisdom of the ages, and an apprehension of our own true nature (of which Thomas Fleming has been at great pains to remind us). The alternative, ultimately, is a cultureless world in which the divine spark, the free will, and the wisdom of the ages have been repudiated and man has been reduced to a paltry creature of momentary appetites. If we lose, then the destructive and negative underside of Western civilization (so well displayed by Orwell in 1984) will have won a total victory.

Examples of the triumph of the underside are myriad in every aspect of our lives. To take just one: The biblical Ten Commandments are the fount of all our law, both in spirit and in historical fact. They embody wisdom, good faith, good will, and divine command. But the tyrants in black robes have dredged up from the alchemical underside of our culture a fiction that postulates the source of law as man-made theory. And they have ordered that their fiction must be kept free of the taint of “religion,” the true source of our law.

Chronicles has been fighting the enemy of culture with skill and persistence—and, yes, courage—for three decades now. No eyes have been more acute in spying out the enemy who pretends to be a friend. The fight has been against long odds. Will our outnumbered and out-supplied company suffer the fate of the Old Guard at Waterloo? Or will we finally win through against the odds, like Washington and his rebels? In any case, there is no better cause to which to pledge ourselves. I expect that *Chronicles* will keep up the fight for a long time to come, and that we will continue to relish the joy of battle, with good comrades in a good cause. 

Two books by Celtic historian
and *Chronicles* contributor **J. Michael Hill**

Celtic Warfare, 1595-1763

&

Fire & Sword:

***Sorley Boy McDonnell and the Rise of
Clan Ian Mor, 1538-1590***

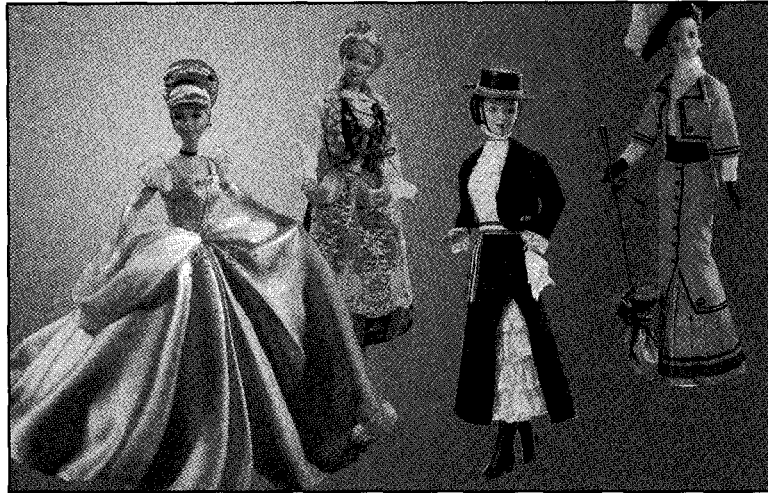
Scotland and Ireland produced the best fighting men in Europe from the 16th through the 18th centuries. These two books tell the story of a people who struggled against great odds to preserve a traditional civilization against the modern English state. *Celtic Warfare* (softcover, 203 pages, 1986 and 2005) details the continuity in Scottish and Irish strategy, tactics, logistics, and weaponry from the Irish wars of the 1590's to the end of the French & Indian War in 1763. *Fire & Sword* (hardcover, 321 pages, 1993) centers upon the tumultuous life and career of Sorley Boy McDonnell (1510-1590), whose sagacious leadership made Clan Ian Mor a major force in the development of the Celtic heartland in the 16th century.

Order both books for the special price of \$40.00 (postpaid).
***Celtic Warfare* alone: \$20.00 ppd.; *Fire & Sword* alone: \$25.00 ppd.**
Send check or money order payable to Michael Hill, P.O. Box 760, Killen, AL 35645.

Dressing for Progress

A Culture of Lovelessness

by Andrei Navrozov



Melanie Anderson

The direction taken by progress to the America of the future, as I saw it, was toward abstraction. If one looked to the natural world to supply the measure of what was concrete, then this world was long in the past, perhaps not actually with the dinosaurs, but certainly with the Model T and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It may be that an apple was first the apple of paradise, and then an ordinary apple, but the apple of today was the representation of an apple in three dimensions, that of tomorrow in only two, and finally in one, at which stage of progress the flesh would become word and the sweetly old-fashioned, fragrant name *apple* would be the only reality allowed it. Perhaps it could even become a number instead of the retrograde name, not unlike a supermarket bar code, and scanning it with a personal handheld wish-fulfilment device would be real enough for the average Joe.

The movement toward abstraction was unstoppable, because the less reality people had to their share, and the fewer the tastes, the colors, and the sounds they remembered, the more the system of symbols that had come to envelop them became the only one in which they knew how to live. Their plasticine food and electronic money, their leatherette careers and television democracy, their satellite wars and paper egalitarianism, their digital pleasure and interactive pain, their artificial air and reconditioned water, all rendered them as unable and unwilling to function in any other environment as fish asked to walk on land. To this futuristic metamorphosis, women were better suited than men because men had always been more real, a controversial point that I shall amplify presently.

When the Roman plebs wished to reduce human life to a single demand, this was, famously, bread and spectacle. Christ

paraphrased it as bread and wine, perhaps because he was not of the metropolis, and the people he was addressing were people of the soil. But anyway, by whatever reckoning, what life is understood to consist of are these two elements, one as real as a loaf in the belly, and the other a lot less real but a lot more fun, a thing of the spirit. Christ, who left the first element more or less unchanged when he asked his followers to pray for their daily bread, redefined the second as forgiving and being forgiven, and history records that, by and by, the swinging metropolis came to accept his revolutionary definition. Despite this, the architects of the Christian Church laid inordinate emphasis on spectacle, generally, and on that of the oblation of the Eucharist, in particular, suggesting that what had been poured into the new bottles was the same old wine.

Looked at in another way, the elements are the male and the female. One is the *panis* of man, as excruciatingly real as farm labor. The other is the *circus* of woman, transcendent and spectacular, where man forgives and forgets like Odysseus in the arms of Circe. Bread does not entertain; it stupefies. Theater attracts and is not meant to satisfy.

Originally created from man's rib as an antidote to solitude, like a robot or an electronic home-entertainment device, woman became alive and indispensable, yin to Adam's yang in the totality of life. The story of Original Sin is nothing if not an eternal reminder that satiety needs caprice as much as caprice requires satiety, and now that paradise has been lost, it remains to man to toil in the sweat of his brow with the sole aim of feeding, like a drug habit, his abiding hunger for entertainment. His insatiable appetite is for the transcendent, the spiritual, the playful, the impractical, the paradoxical and the generally unpredictable, and, though God chose to allow these qualities to develop and embody themselves in the form of woman, it is not uncommon for man to seek them elsewhere: elsewhere in man, or else in books, in monastic seclusion, in a London

Corresponding editor Andrei Navrozov writes from Palermo, Sicily. This article is an excerpt from his novel *Earthly Love*.

casino, in a Warsaw café.

Man is the hard crust of reality, a big brown lump of what little there is, just enough to make the vital difference in meaning between life and death. Woman is the spirit of suspended disbelief, a mirage, a fiction, a play of the imagination. Unreality, insatiability, incompleteness are qualities that make up the very essence of theater, which simulates the immaterial by material means, such as using a crude *mise-en-scène* of ropes and pulleys to make the audience dissolve in a flood of tears. And the theater of femininity has the whole wide world for its *mise-en-scène*. The whole world is falling over itself to design its masks, sew its costumes, perfect its maquillage, and ready its props, and all for the singular satisfaction of being stimulated by a continuous spectacle whose very object, like the tales of the Arabian nights, is not to satisfy.

In the same sense that the universe was an idea of God, women are an idea of man, which sprang from his imagination, his loneliness, and his desire for abstraction. And that is why, when faced with the futurist utopia of a new paradise on Earth implausibly called the United States of America, it was women who were more easily seduced by the possibilities it offered, possibilities that appeared coadunate with the art which, from the beginning, had been their principal sphere of immanence.

I am not saying that women do not exist—merely that they exist more in art than in reality. In the same sense that the universe was an idea of God, women are an idea of man, which sprang from his imagination, his loneliness, and his desire for abstraction. And that is why, when faced with the futurist utopia of a new paradise on Earth implausibly called the United States of America, it was women who were once again more easily seduced by the possibilities it offered, possibilities that appeared coadunate with the art which, from the beginning,

had been their principal sphere of immanence.

When the noblewoman Marie Antoinette turned the story of Cinderella inside out and put on the dress of a lowly shepherdess, this *coup de théâtre* created a worldwide furor that reverberated for centuries after her death. Until fairly recently, in America as elsewhere, costume could deviate from class, fortune, character, and occasion only in exceptional circumstances, and the Manhattan Cinderella who dressed up as Marie Antoinette to attend a masked ball was not any freer to choose her day-to-day clothes than was her low-born Venetian counterpart five-hundred years earlier. But then one fine day, as if put there by the postman's fairy hand, the promise of a new paradise, in the guise of a junk-mail circular from a women's magazine, lay on her doormat: "You shall go to the ball! Quote reference number and batch issue below." She was now free to be what she wanted to be, as the imitation copperplate had it, meaning she could dress up as any other woman living or dead, 24/7, and the opportunity this created was nothing short of magical.

She could dress up and was allowed to act the part. She could wear the clothes of a schoolgirl in the morning, those of a lady of leisure in the afternoon, and transform herself into a prostitute in the evening. She could wear workingmen's boiler suits, or gangster pinstripes, or kilts of Scottish clans, or hardly anything at all; she could rustle in taffeta and slither in satin; she could pretend she was Mary Magdalene, or Cleopatra, or Marie Curie for that matter. Once a mere Cinderella, she was now a whole harem of women, limited in number by nothing except the prince's solicitude or his appetite for novelty, and all that remained was to exhibit her newly liberated art before the male audience on whose enthusiasm it still depended whether the taffeta for rustling in was to be natural or synthetic, and the satin, all-polyester or fashion-blend.

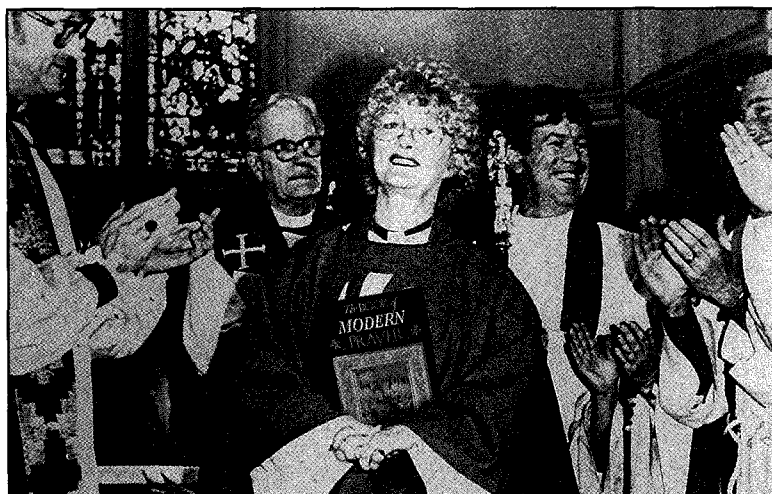
Clothes were only a fragment, of course, of the American dream of progress, by means of which the art of femininity would be released from the shackles of postlapsarian tradition, but together with all the other fragments, it soon took its place in the story of women's liberation. Progress meant science, too, and carnival masks for the theater of the everyday could now be made by the manipulation of women's subcutaneous tissue, by injections of artificial substances such as silicone, indeed by a whole new commercial branch of medicine. Progress also meant politics, and here the collision over new roles for women reenacted a series of largely irrelevant—though, of course, highly entertaining—spectacles from the era of the American Civil War, which no sooner emancipated the people from one rhetorically veiled reality than it made them slaves of another, economically more vast and socially more enduring.

As Soviet totalitarianism found itself imperiled, at least at the initial stages of its development, by any political arrangement that permitted, say, a cobbler to make shoes in the privacy of his home, so American futurism could not coexist with a competing philosophy, such as that of the Old World from Petrarch to Byron and from Rabelais to Wodehouse, which held, in essence, that some people are noblemen though most are born commoners, that certain men are clever no matter what and others lifelong dunces, and that some women are divinely beautiful while the rest are plain. The insidious tactic of progress, accordingly, was to use every means at the disposal of a mature capitalist democracy to eradicate the competing philosophy down to the last vestige. 

An American Dilemma

The Episcopal Church (1976-2006)

by Tom Landess



In 1976, the Episcopal Church, U.S.A., met in General Convention to consider, among other things, two questions: the adoption of a new Book of Common Prayer and the ordination of women. Whether they knew it or not, the delegates were actually resolving a deeper, more disturbing dilemma: whether to remain orthodox or to remain respectable.

From its beginnings and well into the 20th century, the Episcopal Church had enjoyed the luxury of being both. While theological debates raged in other branches of Christendom, Episcopalians agreed on the tenets of the historical creeds and quarreled instead over high church and low church. Though, in some locales, other denominations brought social status to their membership, nationwide, the Episcopal Church was the place to be if you wanted to join the country club or meet the president of the bank. At St. Albans, orthodoxy and respectability were old friends and sat in the same pew on Sunday mornings.

Then, in the second half of the 20th century, a rift occurred; and, soon enough, the two were no longer speaking. The nation suddenly found itself in the grip of social revolution. The civil-rights movement, peace movement, women's movement, and sexual revolution quickly changed America from a stable, traditional society into a political and cultural war zone. The media and the academy quickly sided with the revolutionaries and began to exert an ever-increasing influence on Christian churches. Soon, it became unfashionable to adhere to creeds and traditional ways. The chic, educated crowd was ready for new ideas, new social arrangements, a new church.

Episcopalians were told that the Book of Common Prayer—dating back to the 16th century—was too penitential, too fo-

cused on sin. When praying, people knelt like cowering serfs instead of standing straight and tall. They repeated phrases like “have mercy upon us, miserable offenders” and “there is no health in us.” Even worse, the Episcopal Church had an all-male clergy in an emerging era of militant feminism. If a woman could be the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, she should be able to be a priest or a bishop in the Episcopal Church.

Indeed, elite Episcopalians concluded that, if they did not slough off their gauche orthodoxies and enter the Age of Aquarius, the Church would no longer be a fashionable place to promenade on Sunday mornings. At the beginning of the cultural revolution, the leading spokesman for such heterodoxy was the Rt. Rev. James Pike, who became a celebrity clergyman while serving as dean of New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine—the most conspicuous pulpit the Episcopal Church had to offer. And, as far as the mainstream media were concerned, he was saying all the right things: He rejected the Virgin Birth; he dismissed the doctrine of the Trinity as false and irrelevant; and he endorsed the ordination of women. An accomplished phrase maker, he called for “more belief and fewer beliefs.” He was “refreshing,” “outspoken,” “brilliant.” His thoughtful face appeared on the cover of *Time*.

This notoriety won him the see of California and the growing disapproval of his orthodox fellow bishops, already a shrinking number in the Episcopal Church. In 1966, a group led by Henry I. Louttit, bishop of the Central Archdeanery of South Florida, demanded that Pike be tried for heresy.

John Hines, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, met with Louttit and a small delegation in New York and told them he had polled key figures in the mass media, who had declared unanimously that a heresy trial would severely, disastrously damage the Church's image.

Most of the bishops agreed. The bishop of New York ex-

Contributing editor Tom Landess is a retired English professor who has published a number of books and articles, many of which have appeared under his name.

pressed the feelings of the majority: "Of all the methods of dealing with Bishop Pike's views, the very worst is surely a heresy trial! Whatever the result, the good name of the church will be greatly injured."

Hines asked Louttit and his cohorts to allow an *ad hoc* committee to address the problem more informally, less visibly. Louttit reluctantly agreed. Members of the committee met, engaged in a great deal of hand wringing, and came back with a report that said (in part):

It is the opinion that this proposed trial would not solve the problem presented to the church by this minister, but in fact would be detrimental to the church's mission and witness. This heresy trial would be widely viewed as a "throw back" to centuries when the law in church and state sought to repress and penalize unacceptable opinions. It would spread abroad a "repressive image" of the church and suggest to many that we were more concerned with traditional propositions about God than with the faith as the response of the whole man to God.

At Wheeling, West Virginia, the House of Bishops adopted this statement by an overwhelming vote, though they also agreed to "censure" Bishop Pike—a small, dry bone tossed to Christian orthodoxy. In the above passage, two phrases—"unacceptable opinions" and "repressive image"—revealed what was really going on.

Once he had made short work of the Trinity, Bishop Pike refused to say "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" during services he conducted. What Pike professed was a modern version of the Arian heresy.

In the first of these phrases, the bishops suggested that Pike's dismissal of the Trinity was mere "opinion" rather than a denial of eternal truth. For decades, high and low churchmen had been arguing heatedly over the practice of garnishing the liturgy with *sanctus* bells and incense. Following this decree, they could also argue over the doctrine of the Trinity in the same earnest but harmless way.

In the second phrase, "image" is elevated to the level of First Principle. Once he had made short work of the Trinity, Bishop Pike refused to say "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" during services he conducted. Given the unique centrality of this doctrine to Christianity, what Pike professed was a modern version of the Arian heresy. Yet to say so officially, the bishops agreed, would be to expose the Episcopal Church

to the charge of "dogmatism"—an unacceptable alternative to looking the other way.

The bishops came together in Wheeling as one kind of church and parted ways as quite another. Henceforth, the Episcopal Church would have no theology to anchor its speculations and enthusiasms, no commitment to immutable truths, no real mind—only a deepening concern for public opinion, which its defenders euphemistically called "tolerance."

At the time of the Pike controversy, the Episcopal Church had no formal catechism. Its theology could be found in the text of the Book of Common Prayer (1928 version)—embedded in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, in the Prayer of Consecration, and in services such as Baptism and Ordination. This theology was orthodox in every respect, which is why the modernist bishops and priests saw the Prayer Book as a dinosaur, at best, and a dire threat to "progressive thinking," at worst. It had to go.

Even as the liturgical debate raged, a parallel controversy was developing—one that would again threaten the Church's respectability. The feminist movement had captured the imagination of the media; and, suddenly, an all-male clergy was giving the Church "a repressive image." A debate emerged; but even before the 1976 General Convention could resolve the issue officially, three retired bishops, acting in defiance of then-current canon law, ordained female priests. And why not? No compelling authority existed to restrain them. And hadn't Bishop Pike received a mere slap on the wrist?

The orthodox forces had been too preoccupied with the Prayer Book to think seriously about the feminist movement. The General Convention—stacked with anti-Prayer Book activists—stunned the Church by canonizing the ordination of women.

Nor could this new church defend Christian moral teachings. A year after the ordination of women, Bishop Paul Moore of New York—a high-profile Pike-alike—ordained an open and practicing lesbian. A brief and fruitless furor ensued. Moore issued an "apology" of sorts, and the ordination of open homosexuals was put on the shelf for several decades.

This transformation from orthodoxy to theological anarchy by no means occurred without damaging consequences. Hoards have left the Episcopal Church. No one knows for sure how many or where they went, but, clearly, a substantial portion—wounded and disillusioned—sit at home on Sundays, watching *Meet the Press*. Others have "gone to Rome" or the Greek Orthodox Church. A few have even ended up in evangelical congregations—a far cry from the solemn liturgy they loved in the old Episcopal Church.

However, a significant number formed what are now called "continuing churches," most of them using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, with bishops and clergy who can trace their apostolic lineage back to one of the 12 Apostles. The growth of these churches has been slow and strife-ridden. When Moses led the saving remnant out of Egypt, he probably took with him a ragtag band of pagans, pickpockets, and murderers—anyone who wanted out of Egypt. Later, he took a branch, dipped it in the blood of a lamb, and sprinkled everybody, making them all Jews. When the 1976 General Convention ended, the best and the worst left the Episcopal Church together: the true believers who could no longer tolerate fashionable heresy and, with them, the ideologues, misfits, and power seekers.

A volatile mix of the orthodox and half-sane, these defectors have wandered in the wilderness for decades, bickering among themselves, splitting into even smaller fragments held together by certitude and memory. Indeed, to cynical observers, they have become what the Episcopal hierarchy predicted: excessively dogmatic and finally irrelevant.

However, at least one man believes that these disparate factions can find enough common ground to form a single unified church—Bishop Paul Hewett of the diocese of the Holy Cross. A trim, dark-haired man in his late 50's—convivial, articulate, and often eloquent—he takes the orthodox position that the Christian Church exists in unity with Christ, no matter how often we carve up its temporal jurisdictions or deliver it for a time to heresy.

“The Church’s unity,” he says, “is the sign to shattered, splintered humanity of wholeness and new life in Christ. Our unity is a given. We cannot make the Church one. It already is one. What we do is reveal this unity, or obscure it.”

Bishop Hewett sees his first order of business as the melding of eight separate continuing churches into one organic whole—a free-standing and orthodox “province.” The chief obstacle to the unity of these communions is not really doctrinal, canonical, or liturgical. With some serious and self-effacing debate, a consensus might be reached on the ways and teachings of the Church. So what is the biggest stumbling block to unity?

Bishops.

Each branch of the continuing church has its geographical jurisdictions, and they tend to overlap. In one state, for example, two rival bishops reign in cathedrals a mere 30 miles apart. So which one, in the interest of reunion, would be willing to put his purple tunic in mothballs and surrender his crook and miter? The probable answer to that question is “neither”—as Bishop Hewett well knows. Thus, in his drawing-board province, all current bishops would retain their episcopal status, able to confirm laymen, ordain priests, and even participate in the consecration of new bishops.

However, it might be necessary to ask that some bishops allow other bishops to become head dog in these new geographical jurisdictions. As Bishop Hewett has said,

We recall the example of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, which at one time had two separate jurisdictions in the United States. They became a single jurisdiction when one of the bishops said to Metropolitan Philip, “You are a better man than I. So you look after the whole thing.” That kind of courage and humility is a miracle of God’s grace.

“Miracle” is the right word. Yet he counts on precisely that kind of grace to reconstitute at least a portion of the fragmented Anglican Communion in America. “The Holy Spirit,” he says, “is not very interested in our territorial squabbles.”

“If we can’t do this,” he told a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “then I think Anglicanism in this country is lost. Everyone who has left [the Episcopal Church] will either become Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox or go nowhere. We have one more five-year window if we’re going to put the thing together right.”

To this end, he is constantly on the road, talking to bishops in other communions, meeting with like-minded clergy and

laity in Great Britain, even traveling to Norway and Sweden, where a chilly remnant is struggling to keep the flickering flame of orthodoxy alive. Fishing for true believers in Scandinavia may seem like trolling for marlin in a wading pond, yet the Swedes and Norwegians periodically come to London to join Hewett and others in strategy talks. So maybe the grace Bishop Hewett seeks is beginning to work its quiet magic in the most unlikely places.

Bishop Spong is by no means as bright or as learned as Bishop Pike was; but, in an age when pagan ignorance is in fashion, he does not have to be.

As for the Episcopal Church, it is still on a collision course with historical Christianity. Its positions on women’s ordination and homosexual rights are irrevocable. If its bishops were to back down now and reaffirm traditionalist views on these subjects, they would lose the respectability they have so tenaciously retained over the last 30 years.

Bishop Pike’s spiritual heirs are everywhere; but, over the past decade, the most prominent has been the Rt. Rev. John Spong, bishop of Newark, now retired. Bishop Spong has discussed his militant unbelief in several books, including *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, in which he argues, point by point, that all of the historical doctrines specified in the creeds are nonsense and that the Christian Church must reject them or shrivel to irrelevancy and be swept away by the winds of change. Bishop Spong is by no means as bright or as learned as Bishop Pike was; but, in an age when pagan ignorance is in fashion, he does not have to be.

Bishop Spong’s highly publicized sanctification of homosexuality helped to pave the way for the 2003 consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson, who, years earlier, had left his wife and children to live openly with a male lover. When the General Convention put its imprimatur on this rejection of biblical morality, the Episcopal Church found itself seriously at odds with worldwide Anglicanism. Indeed, Episcopalians may soon find themselves out of communion with Anglicans in other countries. Bishop Robinson did not help matters when, in a recent interview with Planned Parenthood, he trumpeted his own moral relativism. When asked if he was “pro-choice,” he answered: “Absolutely. The reason I love the Episcopal Church is that it actually trusts us to be adults. In a world where everyone tries to paint things as black or white, Episcopalians feel pretty comfortable in the gray areas.”

Indeed, they do. These days, that is the place to be, the most respectable part of town. The entire popular culture has moved into the gray house next door and throws block parties every weekend. The stern folks who live way over on Black-and-White Street—such as Bishop Paul Hewett and his followers—do not know what they are missing. ☞

RUOK? AWHFY?

Communication in the Vast Wasteland

by James O. Tate

I do not live in a painting by Magritte or by De Chirico or even by Carmen Cicero—no, really, I don't, honest, scout's honor, no kidding—but sometimes I get the creepy sensation that I do. That sinking feeling is an identifiable vertigo not caused by imposing stimuli, such as intimidating heights, but by lesser, humdrum disconnects, such as standing by a door or in a parking lot or walking on the sidewalk and hearing a conversational tone from a stranger addressing the void with a Nokia cellphone in his hand. It is the tone of voice, private in public, that seems surreal, I suppose. But then, there is the compensatory emergence from dissociation as cognition gathers through the recognition of the banalities that are uttered: "Yeah? . . . I dunno . . . Me neither . . . What you wanna do? I dunno. Whatever." There somehow seems a discrepancy between the inanities transmitted and the pretentious medium of transmission, the vehicle of which is, unlike much else except vodka, imported from Finland. The big deal is to some degree lessened through its ubiquity, but, make no mistake, in its unmistakable vacuity, the phenomenon is a big deal. The appurtenances of contemporary existence don't offer much in the way of excitement or in the regeneration or life department, but the hype is relentless.

The gap between the promise and the humdrum reality has been a feature of modern life a lot longer than cell phones have been. Modern politics was supposed to deliver us from all the oppression of the past—that's a good one! Modern society was supposed to liberate us from constraints and illusions. And modern technology was going to be the vehicle to create a new world with a new consciousness. What a bummer that the new consciousness too often means being a dope.

The melancholy long withdrawing roar caused by the empty promises of modern society has been felt for a long time, but it has not often been understood. Though romanticism was one form of that melancholy, that mode has been politically misconstrued and manipulated ever since. Even so, one neopagan romantic managed, in the style of Diogenes, prophetically to attack the blather of technological innovation a century and a half ago in a manner Thoreauily attuned to our moment:

We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. . . . We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flap-

ping American ear will be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough.

Well, it is not far from the princess's whooping cough to the hanky-panky of Paris Hilton, so here we are—or, rather, there it is. The mountain labors and produces a mouse. But we can linger in the precincts of the old technology before we get down with all the new hot stuff.

Thoreau did not have much use for newspapers and was even hostile to libraries, and perhaps we can understand his disposition, as time has revealed even more problems than he knew. Of course, newspapers have long since "gone online," but they still appear in their pulp analogue format, and they still have their readers, of whom I am not proud to be one. My own attention to newspapers might be called an addiction or, more accurately, a bad habit (or even a superstition, because attention averts worse news). Fifty years of morbid fascination tells me that newspapers have actually declined in quality since I started reading them. Take the *New York Times*—please. When I started reading the "Gray Lady," I was impressed by its air of objectivity, its international coverage, and its sober attention to the arts. Well, I was young and had not then heard about the Stalin embarrassments, but I was around for the Castro puffery. The *Times* still maintains an air of objectivity, though, today, that air is but an affected *poof*. The coverage of the arts has long since been a complete sellout to the fraud of contemporary incompetence, though here we must realize that the *Times* cravenly followed and did not lead the trends. But the international coverage—whoa! I particularly relished the issue of March 20, 2006, which featured a bonus section, a "special advertising supplement" of eight pages, sponsored by the "government" of Sudan. The cognitive dissonance became overwhelming as I remembered all the editorials about the genocide in Darfur and the op-ed pieces about the genocide in Darfur and the news stories about the genocide in Darfur and the calls for intervention in Darfur and even for bombing in Darfur. They somehow did not square with all the pages of drooling and slobbering about oil in Sudan and minerals in Sudan and banking in air-conditioned splendor in Khartoum and the two banking systems (one based on *sharia*) and all the other opportunities for international financiers like me. The money would explain a sentence such as "Ministers are frustrated that coverage of Sudan in the international media has focused almost exclusively on the fighting between rebels and Arab militias in the western province of Darfur." Mutilation, rape, and slaughter is something more or less than fighting, but we do make exceptions if the victims are Christians, as the *Times* has done before.

But enough of the "Gray Lady," or, as she has come to be known more appropriately, the "Old Slut." Let us relate instead to something more contemporary, more now, more con-

Contributing editor James O. Tate is a professor of English literature at Dowling College on Long Island.

nected to what's going on. And yes, I am thinking about the blessings we find on cable and satellite television, and all of the bills that we receive as the rates are approved by the government to support our need for so many exciting channels! And it is hard for me to distinguish between my excitement at the number of channels and my glee at what is on those channels and my political joy at the segmentation of the channels, which, by uncanny coincidence, is framed around the ethnicity, race, religion, sex, orientation, and age of putative viewers, so that the service providers are better equipped to provide service to the diverse needs of the community and its diverse community needs.

Of course, I have access to only a limited number of channels myself, but I do not feel too constrained about that, especially not after a friend explained to me that he recently acquired 500 channels and flipped through all of them only to conclude that there was nothing on TV. Somehow, I was not surprised. But there can be difficulties, even with 500 channels. For example, I am aware of at least five pornography channels, and these could present a difficulty if you are married (as I have heard professors seriously discuss), or even if you are not—for how could you distinguish between the Hot Network, the Hot Zone, Playboy TV, Spice Platinum, and A Taste of Spice, except by assiduous study? Furthermore, there is a new problem, because, with at least two new “gay” channels, we now have to wonder how the service providers can provide service to such a diverse community (gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual) in order to serve equitably all the equal needs of that adult-subscriber market segment as determined by focus group.

Leaving the agonies of that problem aside, there are some other issues with the media in all their fulsome development. One of them is simply how to find out what the news is, especially if you are tired of the Old Slut and of the tabloids with all their pictures of such ladies as Madonna and Mariah Carey and Lindsay Lohan and all the rest of them. But strangely enough, even with all the channels, the news is more remote than ever before. I mean, what is the news anyway, after all? A phenomenological response would be something like this: Though, decades ago, the news looked like Walter Cronkite and seemed sometimes at least to be a chronicle of events, now the image of the news is a lot more like Lindsay Lohan, but *dressed*, preferably in a jacket *without a blouse*, so that her nude chest is only one button away. So you can catch the news and hear about the price of oil while thinking subliminally about something else, which makes the news rather spicier, *n'est-ce pas*? And, in case yours is a different orientation, the news might also be the image of a girly-boy looking quite suave and mellow with a really together hair treatment and ensemble, and, if so, *laissez les bons temps rouler*. But even then, after such a roll in the hay, you still do not know what the news is, because somebody does not want you to.

Without basic information or coherent accounts of salient issues, however, there are a lot of channels and a lot of time to fill. This is where Scott Peterson comes in, and all the other murder stories and dog-bites-man stories, not to mention all the rock videos, the police videos, the amateur videos, the professional steroid sports, the pre-formulated discussions, the white-trash exhibitionism, Oprah, Dr. Phil, Regis Philbin, and calls for bombing (but not in Darfur) from detached and thoughtful observers such as William Kristol.

And we have to admit that the news is not the only thing you

cannot find out about on television; history is a problem, as well. That is why my favorite channel is the History Channel, because, like Agent Mulder and even Agent Scully, I am really interested in UFOs and the government cover-ups and the abductions and the conspiracies and the Bermuda Triangle, the Loch Ness Monster, Big Foot, and the conspiracy to cover up the children Jesus had with Mary Magdalene (those little trolls!), which, I thought, was treated with historical nuance and with all the concern for Christian sensitivities that we have come to expect.



Melanie Anderson

I have wondered, however, about what is now the Military Channel, which was consolidated from others, including the old Wings Channel, because, after all, there is only so much footage that was shot in the last few wars. A great deal of that footage is about bombing—carpet-bombing, dive-bombing, precision bombing, torpedo bombing, para-fragging, strafing, and, more recently, cruise missiles and smart bombing, played over and over again—they have more surprises on the adult programming, though how would I know that if I do not watch it? But why so much bombing? I just have no clue—what interest could that possibly serve? Then there were the color films of GIs summarily executing wounded Japanese soldiers in the Pacific campaign—that was something remarkable about the Greatest Generation. But when all the bombing was exhausted, they just went back to lots of Adolf Hitler recycled endlessly, seeming to share at least some footage with the History Channel. Again, I was at a loss to explain the Hitler stuff, but I figured everything was OK because somebody higher up was making all the decisions and it was for my benefit. I learned that Hitler spoke German in a harsh manner before big formations of soldiers, had bad teeth, and has been dead for six decades. Then I learned it again. Why was I supposed to remember Hitler when juvenile delinquents and skinheads are supposed to forget him? I realized that meant that I was not juvenile or at least not delinquent (though I seem to be becoming a skinhead through attrition) and felt much better about the whole thing when I saw that the best thing on satellite TV is anything with Roger D. McGrath.

McGrath, however, is a notable exception. By and large, the “vast wasteland” that was identified more than four decades ago has become even more vast than the half-vast wasteland we knew in the old days of broadcast channels. In the meanwhile, there have developed other modes of communication that

present challenges and opportunities of their own. The internet is one such. Not invented by Al Gore, Al Gore to the contrary notwithstanding, the internet was developed from military sources, so that the internet is, among other things, a system of surveillance. Watch yourself. Internet activity has already been introduced in trials, so that visiting the wrong website can actually be a criminal matter. We must add that various sites and blogs can be misleading, wrong, dangerous, and even prurient. The web of connections can move quickly from legitimate historical information to gross terrorist solicitations, as I have myself experienced. At the same time, of course, the internet can be a marvelous instrument for research, but only to the experienced hand. Turning young people loose on the internet is a dubious proposition at best, and everyone should understand that e-mails are permanently recorded. These are some of the blessings of the millennial wonders brought to us by contemporary technology—but only some.

Television might be a vehicle for enlightenment and education and aesthetic refinement, but that is rarely the case. Television seems to be an instrument of political obfuscation, a babysitting pacifier of stay-at-homes, and yet another venue for rock music.

We return to the cell phone, that destroyer of distinctions and propriety, and its developing capacities, ones that are hard to keep up with. Cell phones today can stream video clips, store oldies but goodies like an iPod, take digital photos, and even transmit those photos internationally in only a few seconds. Soon, cell phones will be doing even more. But now is the time to reflect on the charming institution of “text messaging” or Short Message Services, a.k.a. SMS. In the world of SMS, “communication” has been reduced to the hip gibberish so dear to the unenlightened. “Studying” SMS can boost your creativity, so that you, too, can participate in the creation of a moronic subcult. SMS has many benefits. Suppose that the word *great* is too hard to spell out—we substitute GR8! ASAP was stolen from the old writing culture, once quaintly called an acronym. So is SWAK; so is FYI. But how about CUL8R? Or Ht4U? Or RUOK? Well, those are pretty easy, but AWHFY? signifies “Are we having fun yet?” Is this cool or what?

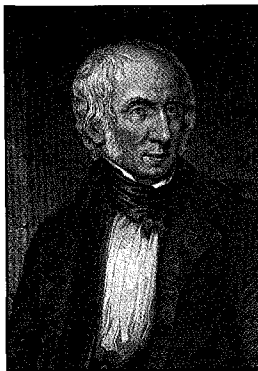
But wait, it gets even cooler. The gibberish known as “leet” (or “133t”) has reached a new low in pointlessness but is nevertheless extremely irritating, and so are “emoticons.”

The big business propagated by contemporary technology leaves us far from heaven, but not far from monomaniacal bloggers and paranoid fantasies. Some of the bloggers are good guys, and some of the paranoia is justified. On the whole, however, the possibilities of noble aspiration and of cultural elevation have been scanted. Television might be a vehicle for enlightenment and education and aesthetic refinement, but that is rarely the case. Television seems to be an instrument of political obfuscation, a babysitting pacifier of stay-at-homes, and yet another venue for rock music. Not many people load their iPods with worthy music—they want, instead, chewing gum for the mind, and they get it in every venue. That suits the powers that be and is very profitable as well.

With the news hard to find, and its meaning obscured by many noises and much confusion, those doubtful of instant bliss and heaven on earth will have to find ways to use the emerging technology to their advantage rather than for their own oppression. The internet can be used for all sorts of benefits, such as shopping nationally for exotic used cars, for obtaining boutique foods, and for all kinds of information; and millions of people take advantage of it every day. On the other hand, computer skills are no longer required for setting up a website—almost anyone can do it quickly, and does. Ditto for podcasts. The technological obscurities and convergences seem both to have opened the gates for independent voices and to have raised the level of confusion. The discrediting of the old broadcast channels of the mainstream has also cast doubt on the fringes, as proliferation has flattened the horizon and maximized doubt.

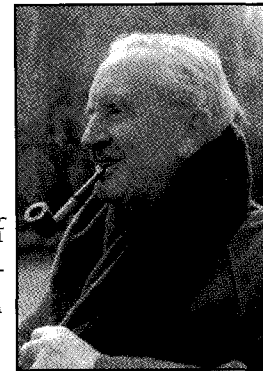
So, just as examples of the old culture, such as books, have to be approached with perspective and discrimination, the opportunities and traps of the new culture have to be examined with a skeptical eye. There is hardly any aspect of the contemporary media that is not a betrayal of a possibility, but those problems will have to be sorted out individually. There are, in the meantime, some possibilities to enjoy or to experience. David Cronenberg’s 1983 thriller *Videodrome*, recently released as a DVD by the remarkable Criterion Collection, is a striking vision of the older technology—James Woods has a VHS slot in his stomach—and perhaps an intimidating fantasy as well. This treatment of the perversions of technology may be called a pessimistic reification of the ideas of Marshall McLuhan and a salutary nightmare into the bargain. In Cronenberg’s film, technology is used to critique technology.

And that was, mind you, 23 years ago. How would we attack the problem of the media in all their proliferation today? My answer is, turn the technology against itself. Put Mozart on your iPod. Use compact discs to play *old* recordings—78’s live again! And best of all, forget about watching all the channels, for—let’s face it—the art of film is pretty much dead. All that is needed is a private library of DVDs and a powerful digital projector in a darkened room. Those pixels really light up when you ignite them with enough lumens. Those old flicks have a renewed glamour in such conditions—actually better than in the original experience. Norma Desmond can still fiercely intone that she is still big—it is the pictures that got small—and mean it, and be believed, as never before. In such a moment of rapture, the film addict is fixed in an ecstasy that justifies the technological means. Better the insanity of the fictional Norma Desmond than the perky “sanity” of the all-too-real Katie Couric.



THE CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION

English Literature From Wordsworth to Tolkien



The Rockford Institute's Center for the Restoration of Humane Learning is pleased to announce a new distance-learning course taught by literary biographer Joseph Pearce, writer-in-residence at Ave Maria University.

With published biographies of Oscar Wilde, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and others, Mr. Pearce is uniquely qualified to teach this course, which includes 24 lectures and a study guide. The course explores the lives of the giants of 19th- and 20th-century English literature and reveals the eternal Christian truths expressed in their work.

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811
or e-mail jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org.



THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE

928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Price: \$240.00

When ordering, specify ACCIS (audiocassette) or ACCISCD (CD).

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

THE CONSERVATIVE BOOKSHELF

ESSENTIAL WORKS THAT IMPACT TODAY'S CONSERVATIVE THINKERS

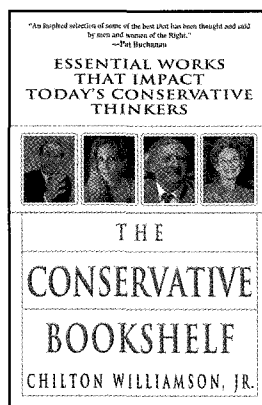
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

“Williamson, the former book review editor at *National Review* and current senior editor for books at *Chronicles* and the author of several novels and non-fiction books himself, knows the difference between a real classic and the mental belches that today often masquerade as ‘conservatism.’”

— Samuel Francis

“Mr. Williamson’s selection of 50 works is as near perfection as is ever approached in this vale of tears. . . . The wise reading and understanding that lie behind his choices are awesome.”

— Clyde Wilson



How many of these conservative classics have you read?

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn
Suicide of the West by James Burnham
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Witness by Whittaker Chambers
The Camp of the Saints by Jean Raspail
City of God by St. Augustine
The Conservative Mind by Russell Kirk
Ideas Have Consequences by Richard Weaver

These and 42 other essential works, selected by Chilton Williamson, Jr., define the ideas that have informed conservatism over the past 4,000 years. No one is better suited to know the books that best articulate just what it means to be a conservative. His insightful analysis and commentary illustrate the timeliness of each title and reveal why these 50 works have earned a place in the library of every thoughtful conservative.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at ChroniclesMagazine.org

Hardcover Price \$27.95
(\$22.95 + \$5.00 shipping and handling)

O Literature, Thou Art Sick

The Consequences of Theory

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The present condition of literature (as that term is ordinarily understood), at least in America, is obviously unhealthy. Its illness is the result not only of internal undermining, “the invisible worm” of Blake’s “The Sick Rose,” but of external conditions, the “howling storm” on which the worm (however implausibly) rode. External and internal decline, all too visible in this case, go together, of course. While they can be traced partly to the enormous social and cultural changes of previous centuries, they are principally a mid- and late-20th-century development, involving separation (or “alienation”) of good readers from good writers, then decreasing numbers of both. Earlier, *belles-lettres* were *meaningful*, as well as vigorous and popular, on both sides of the Atlantic. Mass magazines in America gave considerable space to elite forms of literature, including poetry, as well as more popular forms, both of which nourished “parlour literature”—the practice of reading at family gatherings. Charles Eliot Norton reported in the 1890’s that there were Dante reading clubs from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In 19th-century France, Alphonse de Lamartine could reply to a detractor that his new book of verse would soon be in every cobbler’s pocket. The poems of Victor Hugo, from his odes at age 20 to *The Art of Being a Grandfather*, 55 years later, were read widely, not of course by those with no schooling, but often by those with little. His serialized novels had vast audiences, and not just in Europe; American poet and critic Morris Bishop told how his father’s family waited impatiently for each new episode to arrive in the mail. Now, in contrast, poetry no longer belongs to the mainstream, as Dana Gioia observed, too gently, some years ago in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and fiction has been largely degraded.

Among contemporary conditions favoring the decline of literature, in addition to critical theory (to be discussed shortly), are the dominance of popular culture, low moral standards, and erosion of language (all connected). Popular culture, spread by every medium, drives out better creations, as, according to Gresham’s Law, inferior products, if they reach what is now termed “critical mass,” usually do to superior ones. Instead of being confined to indiscriminating readers, like dime novels or what the French call “train-station literature,” inferior writing has usurped the place of good in the marketplace and is even admired by some who should know better. Such vulgarized writing is now the principal, sometimes the *only*, interest of countless editors and publishers (the latter, with exceptions, large conglomerates uninterested in quality). Popular culture has been legitimized, placed on a footing with, or rather elevated above, high culture; at a nearby state university, a course on rock

’n’ roll is accepted for elective credit in a liberal-arts curriculum that lacks any foreign-language requirement. (Far more offensive examples could be cited.) Degraded moral standards allow for the crudest material to enrich its creators, even—in the case of so-called art—be subsidized by tax dollars, through moral indifference or, worse, as direct defiance, and without any acknowledgment that such degradation is a violation of human dignity. As for language standards, consider what you hear from television news; even the *New Yorker*, once known for its rigorous standards of English, now allows its journalists to use routinely such barbarisms as “It is *him*.” Maybe even the editors do not know better. To ungrammatical language is added the filthy talk that used to be associated with fishwives and sailors. The meaning of words is so adulterated that the word *artist* is now applied to such as Britney Spears and Michael Jackson. Style, in the sense of *good style*, has been so devalued that those who esteem it are condemned as offensive snobs. Though novelists, playwrights, and poets can blame society for abandoning standards of good taste and the ideal of lasting literary value, they, too, are responsible, as they adopt shamelessly the worst demands of publishers or producers. (Look at Larry McMurtry.)

Others who have sabotaged literature are the critical theorists. Now, *theory* need not be a literary Fifth Column. For instance, *Theory of Literature* (1949) by René Wellek and Austin Warren had as its aim not dismantling literature but clarifying literary values and what can be known of the creative process, along with proposing strategies for analysis and judgment; and, while certain approaches there reflected changed modes of thinking, masterworks remained honored, not undermined. Well over half of Hazard Adams’ massive anthology *Critical Theory Since Plato* (1971) is devoted to canonic critics who wrote generally in support of the literary enterprise, though a few might be surprised to see how their thought is interpreted. In contrast, Adams’ and Leroy Searle’s 1986 anthology, *Critical Theory Since 1965*, includes mostly contemporary writers hostile to conventional literature, many of them foreign thinkers who directed their critical aggression against America (while often accepting her dollars). Here, the word *critical* no longer refers to “criticism” in the broad sense, as Aristotle, Horace, Sidney, Addison, Schlegel, Coleridge, and innumerable others practiced it, but, chiefly, to radical cultural critique (hence the proximity of “cultural theory” and “critical theory”) and deconstruction based on revisionist history, linguistics, sociology, and other disciplines in their postmodern stages. Therein lies the difficulty.

What is meant by the term *postmodernism* can be defined roughly, with respect to literary criticism, as denying, on several grounds, the claims of literature (nonradicalized) to *prima facie* truth and meaning, values of taste and beauty, and the worth of writing from privileged groups, considered oppressive. The great modernists such as Eliot, Yeats, and Proust still

Catharine Savage Brosman, professor emerita of French at Tulane University and honorary research professor at the University of Sheffield, has published numerous works of poetry and prose, including *The Muscled Truce* (LSU Press).

believed in words (and art) and their connection to the real; new ways of employing them were still *art* and were valuable. Proust believed *only* in words. The meaning of a work could be chiefly its beauty, or its truth, or both; it could be lyrical, dramatic, narrative, meditative, satirical; but it was still meaning. Even the Surrealists believed in language. The “tradition” was honored, if obliquely. As Pierre Albert-Birot wrote in a manifesto of 1916, anticipating the movement:

The French Tradition: is to break the shackles
 The French Tradition: is to see and understand everything
 The French Tradition: is to search, discover, create . . .
 Therefore the French Tradition IS TO NEGATE TRADITION
 Let's follow the tradition. . . .

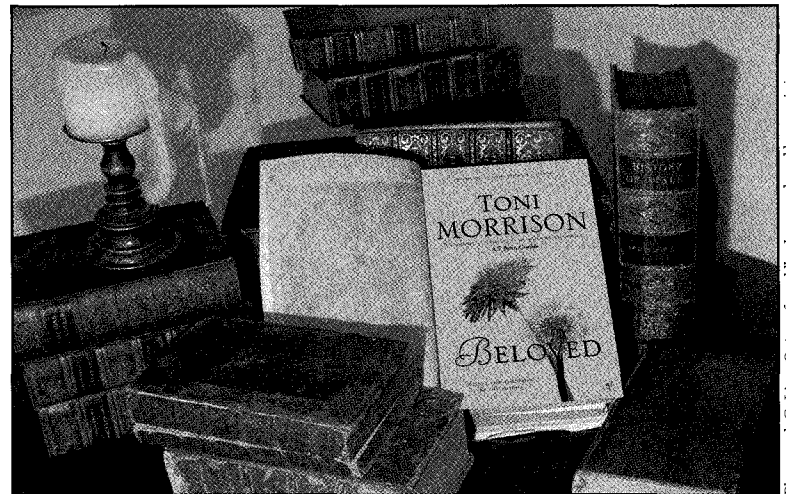
But that was still predicated on the function of language as conveyer of meaning: Words meant what they said, even if antiphrastically; whereas the strain of postmodern criticism for which the late Jacques Derrida deserves credit, along with long-deceased linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, denies the capacity of language to hold and transmit meaning. Words are unstable, indeterminate, without intrinsic connection to what they stand for, and always defined by other words; all statements can always be deconstructed. (Belief in the Word is obviously excluded.) Perfect logic cannot be achieved in language (the old Cratylist complaint, illustrated by the paradox “All statements are false”). Meaning is endlessly *deferred*.

Derrida denied, by the way, the near-nihilism that his position constituted. Shortly before he died, he said that philosophy had been for him “the search for an ethos and a way of life.” However lofty that aim may sound, his influence was nonetheless nefarious. That anyone should read literature or anything at all, except for the pleasure of deconstructing it, contradicts his theses, of course; but the latter constitute an impracticable extreme, a *meta-criticism* (as he might say); even he used words to question them. In practice, his denunciation of the power of language to denote the real and the true is, along with other theories, called into service normally to attack the truth-value of canonic literary and philosophic works.

A second claim connected to truth-value is that, since all writing consists of words used by others and, thus, relates to other texts in endless intertextuality, the writer is merely reshuffling no one's material. There is no authority; there is no author. If you add a further claim, familiar since Freud's ideas were popularized, alas, in Europe and America, to the effect that the self is not only in perpetual conflict but the plaything of unconscious, uncontrollable drives, and therefore is not the rational, aware being that would engage in controlled literary creation, you have all you need to question the value of literature as it was heretofore understood.

Or *almost* everything. For there is also the multiculturalist claim that Occidental literature must be rejected because of its privileged social origins and practice. The “Dead White Male,” whose products are racist, sexist, elitist, rationalist (analytical, “vertical” rather than “horizontal”), and deliberately oppressive (whether he knew it or not), and who excluded the “marginalized” except in rare circumstances, is a monster who, having terrorized the past, must now be slain. Since one blow does not suffice, the attacks remain ongoing. Four veins of thought (all well represented in the Adams-Searle anthology) have contributed to this new dogma: Marxism,

with its theory of social classes and economic exploitation; post-Marxism, which adds to economic and class theory that of the formative, oppressive role of cultural products, structures, and institutions (Michel Foucault's credo); radical feminism, with its hatred of male achievements and deliberate discounting of historical conditions that shaped past customs; and postcolonialism, with its victimology and resentment of the West. According to enthusiasts of this thinking, the literature that originated among and was practiced by those in power is necessarily oppressive and “inauthentic,” as Marxists would say. Aesthetic criteria and values are rejected; refined style is deemed exclusionary, false; good taste constitutes shackles. Even the venerable genres are viewed as tyrannical. Only new writing, by those who denounce analytic reason and adopt an adversarial relationship to past or present (postcolonials and other dark-skinned peoples, women, prisoners, homosexuals and other deviants, and the acolytes of all of these) is viewed as legitimate. (Here is where those who believe the world can be changed by writing—the old-style revolutionaries and new activists—part company with those more radical thinkers who question the efficacy of language.)



Photograph © Liam Quinn at fromoldbooks.org and used by permission.

It may be asserted that, whether critical or creative, the new multiculturalist writing constitutes a valuable creative *élan*. Just as earlier generations pushed the boundaries, “negated the tradition” or, as Jean Cocteau wrote, tried to see “just how far you can go too far,” the formerly marginalized and their apologists, the new critical theorists, push back the frontiers; they are literature's astronauts. Perhaps, from the Greeks on, writers have displeased traditionalists by breaking molds, and daring products of literary evolution may, after a period of incomprehension, be viewed as masterpieces rather than as provocations. Euripides overturned certain conventions of his predecessors and was considered disturbing. Victor Hugo shocked critics by dividing, through caesuras, the alexandrine line of twelve syllables into three groups (4/4/4) instead of the usual two (6/6). His innovations on the stage—scenes by torchlight, amours between a servant and a noble, characters of grotesque physique or monstrous soul—were deemed still worse. Flaubert was put on trial for *Madame Bovary*; certain poems by Baudelaire were condemned in court, and the author, fined. No matter: Romanticism assimilated these innovations and disturbing materials and countless others until they, too, became literary commonplaces and were extended or replaced.

Current critical theory is different in kind, however, since

it, first, denies value *ipso facto* to creations by members of condemned groups (or holding forbidden views—think of how Eliot is regarded by cultural critics); second, subverts belief in truth and meaning by challenging the ability of words to refer to and convey, in any sense, the *real*; third, attacks values of taste and beauty; and, fourth, undermines the ideal of the learned man. The last enterprise may be the worst, since, armed with learning, one could see through the others.

The most deplorable thing is that, in the general remove of literary culture from the public forum (there are hardly any independent critics nowadays), these critical sophists have come to dominate the academy, the locus of such literary education as American youth get. Postmodern thinking appears to have filtered down to many high schools, and no university offering graduate studies in literature is without courses in critical theory, supported sometimes by a disproportionate number of faculty positions, plus lectures and workshops. One wonders, nevertheless, how many students and even faculty read the turgid prose of its practitioners, which, at its worst, is gibberish. (Well, some of my graduate students did *not* read assignments given by colleagues, I know.) There are further consequences. Since analytical thinking, the characteristic mode of Occidental men, is considered oppressive, and organizing literary study by language or territorial division reflects, it is asserted, oppressive structures and “opaque” social relationships, there has been a concerted effort to break down departments, curricula, and syllabi organized rationally (by language, genre, or chronology). Anyone can teach almost anything, preferably something unconventional, in any context. A Wesleyan University (Connecticut) faculty member writes in the *American Scholar* (Winter 2005) that one student was assigned Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* in all four courses he took one semester. Chronology is especially despised—a symptom of postmodernist scorn for history; dates are viewed as irrelevant. When students objected, on grounds of historical usage, to a famous professor’s sexual interpretation of the word *screw* in an Emily Dickinson poem, he retorted that the author’s meaning was immaterial.

Not all contemporary modes of criticism are so destructive as what has been sketched here; certain approaches, such as narratology (a way of analyzing plot) and reader-response criticism—emphasizing the context of reading—extend commonsensical understandings from the past, which, rephrased and refocused by discerning critics, may lead to a finer understanding of how literature works. They are *tools*, not dogma. Restating that which “oft was thought” in an altered light can be useful. Circumstances *have* changed; there are new readers, new works, and new ways of looking at old ones. But denying the foundations of past achievements is unjustified. And no criticism should take the place of the literature it is supposed to serve. The reading lists of the past have not been merely revised; they have, in some quarters, nearly given way to criticism on authors once read firsthand. Critical theorists are something of a priestly caste, holding arcane secrets, with the power to validate or invalidate our reading. If we can be initiated into their obscure jargon, we, too, can penetrate their esoteric truths and be saved.

Literature still matters, nevertheless, and its American audience, though small, could be cultivated and enlarged by devoted publishers and proper curricula in colleges. Its traditional uses and pleasures (“*plaire et instruire*,” wrote Boileau in his *Art poétique*, following Horace) remain valid. To portray, examine, and reflect on life, in general terms (as done by the most philo-

sophic writers) or from the individual viewpoint (the more characteristic literary approach); to enrich experience or add to it; to propose ways of being, seeing, knowing; to offer justification and judgment, especially warnings against self-infatuation, and explore the possibility of the moral life—those have been the functions of good writing since the Greeks replaced myth, which functioned somewhat similarly, with rigorously formal, highly reflective modes. By requiring shaping, condensing, focusing, reflection, literature stylizes life, multiplies it, and broadens understanding of ourselves and others, whose innermost emotional and intellectual experiences are made available to us. (To know them thus is voyeurism only to those who make it so; properly, it is sharing in their humanity.)

Good taste is not, of course, always imperative. Was Rabelais refined? Is the Porter’s scene in *Macbeth* in good taste? The coarse, along with the delicate, and evil, with good, are part of the real and, hence, of literature; but, in the Occidental literary tradition, the offensive is not a model, and corrective values are always visible, sometimes juxtaposed. To wallow in disgust and invite others to do so cannot be the purpose of literature. As Chilton Williamson, Jr., pointed out in his review (“No Country for Anyone,” April) of Cormac McCarthy’s *No Country for Old Men*, even McCarthy, often the painter of the most depraved, the least redeemed of human beings, works into his novels a moral dimension, barely glimpsed but thereby all the more crucial.

Literature always points to something beyond itself, a pleasure, verity, judgment, vision. It is more than rewarding; it is essential. The modernists recognized these truths. Wallace Stevens observed, “The pleasure of poetry is to contribute to man’s happiness.” William Carlos Williams, in one of his last poems, “Asphodel, That Greeny Flower,” wrote:

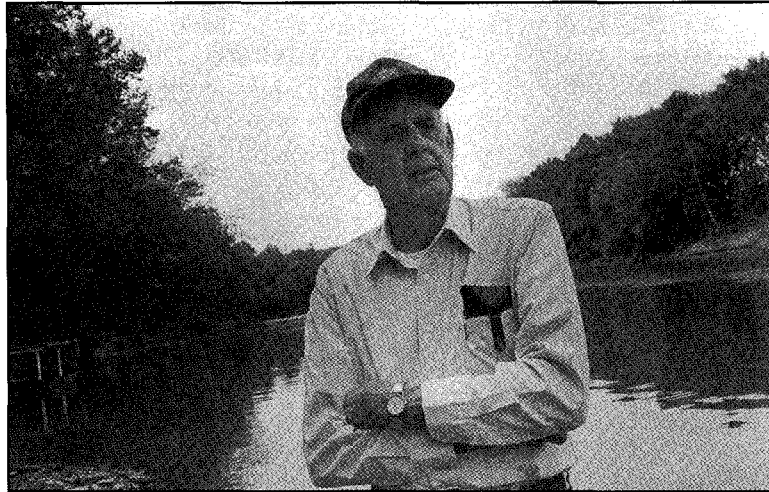
It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

Richard Eberhart, of a younger generation, said in a 1968 speech: “The point of poetry is to make meanings for your life, to discover durable truth of yourself within the flux of life and time . . . Poetry defends the inner capacities of man.”

Belles lettres can make another contribution: Rigor in language both reflects and leads to rigor of thought, surely an urgent national need. That is, reading the best of what has been written cultivates discrimination. Consider the gullibility of the American audience and today’s cultural fare, which the media reinforce or create: government pronouncements, “studies” (sociological, psychological, quasimedical, all purportedly scientific), commercial advertising, tendentious publicity and undertakings of not-for-profits, including universities and museums, live drama, film, all reinforced and publicized by print journalism and television. What is, at face value, information with the presumption of truth or, in the case of entertainment, is taken as normative is, in fact, frequently misleading (often deliberately), manipulative, corruptive. The cultivation of good literature now and study of great works of the past (along with philosophy and history) could provide means to identify and resist what is false and depraved. Perhaps Ezra Pound, Vorticist, crank, asylum inmate, but wise in this respect, should have the last word: “If a nation’s literature declines, the nation atrophies and declines.”

Rendering Us Again in Affection

An Interview With Wendell Berry



Guy Mendes

Wendell Berry is the author of over 40 books and has been writing about conservation, community, and the necessity of good farming for over four decades. His novels include *The Memory of Old Jack*, *Jayber Crow*, and *Hannah Coulter*; among his collections of poems are *A Timbered Choir* and *Given*; and some of his more recent books of nonfiction are *Life Is a Miracle* (a response to Edward O. Wilson's *Consilience*), *Citizenship Papers*, and a small book of extracts from the Gospels, *Blessed Are The Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings about Love, Compassion & Forgiveness*. He is a native of Port Royal, Kentucky, where he has lived most of his life. From it he has drawn the imagined world of his fiction, Port William. He and his wife, Tanya, raise sheep on a farm overlooking the Kentucky River, and both of their children live and farm with their own families nearby. He spoke to contributing editor Katherine Dalton at his home in April.

Why do you write fiction in addition to essays and poetry?

To take that question seriously we're going to have to wander around awhile, maybe. But to start with I'm a storyteller. I like to tell stories. This country's full of stories, and it has a storytelling style that's economical and loves a punch line. Both my grandmothers told me stories, and my grandfather—my mother's father—told me a lot of stories. I grew up listening to stories. I think it's fairly common in cultures that are still oral—and this one was, when I was growing up—people will go out and do something they think is pretty remarkable and they'll be telling the story to each other before they get home. One might tell it and then another might tell it and thus they improve upon it. My granddaddy said there was no use telling

a pretty good story when you could tell a *really* good one.

And that suggests maybe why you depart from the essay into fiction. I've been thinking about this for a long time, because the reason for writing what we call fiction seems to be the desire to tell a *whole* story. And to stick strictly to the truth, what we call nonfictional truth—to tell the story that really happened—is invariably to have an incomplete story. Nobody ever knows all the facts. Time passes, gaps come into memories, and so on. The impulse is an artistic one, the impulse toward wholeness. You may be dealing with your experience, with things that you remember, but they may come scrambled, they may even come from different times in your experience, and you can put them into a story and give them a coherence that they don't have in factual reality.

I've spent a good deal of time this winter writing another little novel called *A Visit to Port William*, and it has two points of view: the point of view of Andy Catlett at the age of nine, and the point of view of Andy Catlett as a man of my age. It deals with the difference between the mind that thought a four-mile-an-hour team of mules was going quite fast enough and the mind that leans against the bulkhead of an airplane and pushes at 500 miles an hour.

The experience that I had as a child is inevitably skewed by being forced into the geography and the *dramatis personae* of Port William and the Port William fictions. And yet memory and imagination can be put together in a kind of coherence, and the two points of view give dimension that it wouldn't otherwise have. Again, it's that impulse toward wholeness—not that art can ever satisfy that impulse, not that it will ever be completely whole, but fiction gives scope to the purpose of wholeness that nonfiction doesn't allow. You have to qualify nonfiction all the time by saying things like, "Well, as best I remember," or, "I don't remember what happened in the next few minutes, but . . ." To make an imagined thing is to place

Contributing editor Katherine Dalton is a freelance writer. She lives in New Castle, Kentucky.

it in a landscape where wholeness seems in reach.

The other thing you're trying for is meaning, of course, which is not separate from storytelling in the quest for wholeness. But ultimately too for pleasure. You wouldn't do it if there weren't a deep pleasure in it, within reach, along with the other things that are within reach that may not be so pleasant.

If one of the laws of thermodynamics holds that the universe tends toward disorder, there is another law of humanness that we would desire to create at least a small corner of order out of that disorder. Is that what you are trying to do?

I think the great writers have always understood the difference between nature and human nature. Nature just clatters along as it will, absorbing its losses, ignoring its losses in a sense, and human nature comes along with checks—charity, hospitality, generosity, love, loyalty, those things. Of course my fiction has tried hard to escape the boundaries of what passes for realism, to pose a question that the realists usually don't deal with: What if a group of people in a little community were conscious of being members one of another? That has required imagination, not factual memory.

I grew up listening to stories. I think it's fairly common in cultures that are still oral—and this one was, when I was growing up—people will go out and do something they think is pretty remarkable and they'll be telling the story to each other before they get home.

Is beauty necessary to art? I ask because beauty is not a given anymore, and in fact the goal of many works of art seems to be something entirely different—to be ugliness, or perhaps the strong reaction evoked by ugliness.

I think beauty is necessary. The effort to make something that's beautiful is just infinitely worthwhile, but this doesn't mean that you don't have to take big bites of ugliness. You've got to acknowledge that it exists. And yet the overall attempt is to go beyond that to the point at which the ugliness is somehow redeemed.

I'm trying again to write about *King Lear*, and *King Lear* probably has some of the ugliest scenes of all of Shakespeare. The scene in which Lear in his oblivious self-absorption subjects his daughters to a love contest—played right, it would be horribly ugly. The scene of the blinding of Gloucester is almost unbearable. The play has to hold those scenes and deal

with them somehow, include them in a larger vision that is redemptive and even beautiful.

I think the great quest of *King Lear* is to imagine clearly the point at which some redemptive force can enter into the context of the play. And I think it does. When Edmund, Gloucester's bad son, dispatches a soldier to kill Cordelia, he says, "men / Are as the time is." It's a flatly deterministic view of human nature: If you live in a bad time, you're going to be a bad person. To me that's a sort of evil absolute that Shakespeare seems to pitch the whole play against. All the good and faithful servants in that play—Kent, Edgar, Cordelia, even the Fool, and finally Albany—they all exist to controvert that principle that men are as the time is. And to my sense those characters are very beautiful in their courage and goodness and faithfulness.

The other sort of absolute evil in that play is Gloucester's line, "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods; / They kill us for their sport." Edgar's great effort is to save his father from the despair of that line. The perfect self-pity of that line is just horrible. I think Shakespeare had the courage, one, to face things like that and, two, to try to imagine what in the human soul was redemptive, what was counter to that negative force. And to me that courage gives lines and acts of great beauty to *King Lear*.

It's not a sentimental view of beauty. It doesn't say that you can put beauty in one pan of the scale and ugliness in the other, and heap up the beauty until it outweighs the ugliness. There is an engagement, a life-or-death engagement, and beauty wins by hanging on, not by heaping up.

Why then is there so much emphasis on ugly books and ugly paintings? Is that related to our artistic emphasis on being original?

It may be that if you have an ugliness within you the quest to be original will bring ugliness out of you. But I think that's the least complicated view of it. The other view has to do with a sort of lower order of the courage I was talking about, the courage to face so-called reality, to face the worst for fear that you'll be surprised by it. But I don't altogether understand this. I don't understand why some people prefer to believe that "men are as the time is."

Related to this is the idea that whatever we have is inevitable, that there's really nothing you can do about the ugliness or the awfulness of human experience. An advocate such as I have been has heard that word "inevitable" over and over and over again. Why isn't it smartest and most sophisticated to say that ugliness is inevitable, make replicas of it, call it art, and sleep better? Be rid of it, in that sense. But the advocates that I am for and have found as allies are not people who reconcile themselves to the inevitability of anything bad. They commit themselves to acts of foolish loyalty, like Kent. Well, what if we're losing it all? What if there is nothing to gain? What if this old man I'm loyal to is going to lose everything? I'm still going to be right here; I'm still going to go on.

Is the common ground among all these people faith? Religious faith? Is it possible to go on without a religious faith?

It may not be faith according to some kind of a sectarian doctrine. But the faith is that experience is somehow redeemable. That to be on the right side in this fight between good and evil,

between compassion and heartlessness, between beauty and ugliness, is without limit rewarding. It's the "without limit" part, not necessarily a doctrine, that makes it religious. People are more likely to do it, I think, if they have religious faith, but that's maybe beside the point. Even C.S. Lewis, you know, made a place for the adamant rationalist in *That Hideous Strength*. There is a rationalist in there who doesn't believe in any of the wonders that are going on, and Lewis honors that: The strict, the absolutely strict or devoted rationalist or empiricist is a thing of wonder. The thing that gets awful is when the empiricists don't understand that their faith in rational intelligence can become superstitious.

I've been reading a book by Harold Morowitz, *The Emergence of Everything*, and in there he talks about what he calls an "epistemic circle." In the epistemic circle, you begin with mind, and you go through the constructs of reality, and you end up again with mind. And he says he's more comfortable with this than he is with either the idealists or the realists—the idealists who say the mind is the only important reality or the only reality, and the realists who say the objective, factual world is the only reality. What he's saying is that there is some kind of interchange going on between what's in here and what's out there, and that you are never going to get to a final, objective, provable truth: "[W]e will never have God's knowledge of the thing in itself."

Maybe there's some comfort in that.

I think there is. Cézanne was not painting exactly what he saw, and he was not painting what he dreamed up; he was painting an imagined world that was parallel to the world he was looking at. Between those two worlds, the imagined and the real, there are points of contact, so that one is somehow measured by the other. I've written about Barry Lopez's paragraphs in *Arctic Dreams* in which he talks about the cultural landscape as a superimposition on the real landscape. The cultural landscape, the known landscape, the landscape of memory, is never going to correspond exactly to the actual landscape. But if it doesn't correspond more or less exactly, the penalties can be harsh, especially in the Arctic.

So what Morowitz is calling the epistemic circle is simply a predicament that human life is in. And there is relief in it. What is claustrophobic is the idea that there is a human system that's entirely adequate. To me that's intolerable. I can't stand it in religious people; I can't stand it in non- or antireligious people. It's frightening because the next logical step from that is a totalitarian government that has all the answers.

In fact, the adjustments between the cultural landscape and the actual landscape can't ever be made finally, and can't ever be made in one place for another place. It means something lively and necessary is going on in adequate local cultures.

I'm sure you've studied other traditions and other faiths—

A little.

—why are you a Christian and not something else?

I'm a Christian in a sense I'm uneasy to talk about. From a sectarian point of view I'm a marginal Christian. But then I'm a marginal person, I'm a marginal writer. But I do know the Bible; I've had the sound of the King James Version in my ears

and mind all my life. I was never satisfied by the Protestantism that I inherited, I think because of the dualism of soul and body, heaven and Earth, Creator and creation—a dualism so fierce at times that it counted hatred of this life and this world as a virtue. From very early that kind of piety was distasteful to me. Nevertheless, I am devoted to that old translation of the Bible, and I'm devoted to the literary tradition that we call Christian. I have studied that, and I'm still studying it. It doesn't mean that I don't know enough about Islam or enough about Buddhism to have learned things from writers in those traditions, valuable things, and I don't think the truth is going to turn up anywhere without a divine origin. I think if it's true, then it's of the party of truth and it's allied to the truth of our tradition.

I'm a Christian in a sense I'm uneasy to talk about. From a sectarian point of view I'm a marginal Christian.

But then I'm a marginal person,

I'm a marginal writer.

Why did you pull together Christ's teachings on love and forgiveness in Blessed Are the Peacemakers?

I'm moved every time I get into the Gospels by the generosity of Christ's talk to His disciples and the people who followed Him around. That seems to me to be the real first church: just a bunch of people coming along to hear. And Christ didn't exclude anybody; there was no test, there was no creed to sign, people came because they thought this Man was speaking the truth and He spoke it to them in an extraordinarily generous way.

I think the story of the Resurrection in the Gospel of John is an incredible story. It's so beautiful, so dramatic, done with so little dialogue—just a few words—and I am always overwhelmed by it.

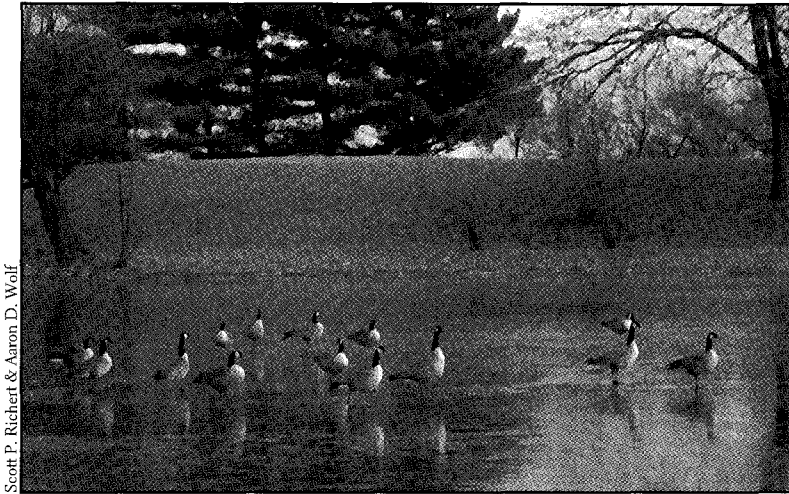
But I'm not answering your question. My motive, I think, was the feeling that something fundamentally ungenerous, unforgiving, and implicitly violent is—as usual, I'm afraid—creeping around organized Christianity, and I wanted to look again at what Christ actually said in, for example, the Sermon on the Mount.

I don't think that you can know the Gospels and know history and not see that something is badly amiss. Something is just wildly off in the history of Christianity. I think it is the constant resort of Christians to violence, to what they call "just wars."

A thing that Shakespeare also is concerned with is the opposition between force and affection or gentleness or good and faithful service. Early in *As You Like It* Celia says to Rosalind, "what [my father] hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection." That theme keeps crop-

ping up, and Shakespeare pushes it to the wall in *King Lear*.

It's this necessity of merely standing by that so impresses me. I think the good ministers must feel it often and often here in these small communities. There they are: Something absolutely awful has happened to one of their people, and they are standing by. Often there's nothing they can do, nothing, and yet there they stand on the impulse to make up in generosity, in constancy, in affection and compassion, what has been taken away by force. I've been there, you've been there; you're standing by somebody you love. You can't help, but you're going to stand. And this is an extraordinary thing. It can't be affirmed except by faith. It's affirmed, that is, in contradiction of everything that the world is telling us is worth something.



Scott P. Richert & Aaron D. Wolf

And I think that's exactly the spirit of the Gospels, and that's exactly the spirit of that little book [*Blessed Are the Peacemakers*]. If you're going to commit yourself to this, then go ahead and do it, and don't try to get logical about the consequences. You'll have to deal with the consequences as they come, and you're not going to know beforehand what they are. That seems to me to be the real Christian commitment, and it certainly coincides with commitment of other kinds. We see examples of this all the time, and our tradition will tell us what to make of them, if we pay attention to our tradition. Why do mothers love their disappointing children? They do it absolutely; there's something inexpressibly good about that. And yet if you try to keep books on the necessity of it, you'll find yourself profoundly frustrated. It's just not going to work out in some kind of accounting.

It's like trying to get your mind around the Amish, who really do act Christian. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you're going to wind up with an economic return, which is very funny, because you can't love your neighbor on the condition of an economic return.

Some people reading the New Testament have had difficulty reconciling parts of Saint Paul with Jesus. Do you have this problem, and how do you resolve it?

Jayber Crow calls him that exasperating, indispensable man Saint Paul. Saint Paul is the second wave; he's the administrator, he's the organizer, the founder, in a way, and so he puts us into funny binds. There's nothing to do about that except

to start wherever you are in history and make the best of it you can. I think you have to recognize that there are some conflicts in the New Testament. Jesus went right straight into the face of authority, it seems to me; He lived hour by hour as an insult to instituted authority. So for that matter did Saint Paul, but Saint Paul wrote that remarkable passage in Romans requiring us to subject ourselves to "the powers that be"—which plays hell with the Founding Fathers, Thoreau, Gandhi, M.L. King, *et al.* These are not Gordian knots to be cut by somebody's sword; these are difficulties to be suffered and lived with.

A book I read recently reminded me that after World War II, Great Britain continued to have rationing and food shortages for years, to the point where many people were not getting enough to eat. Part of the problem was that Britain had become a net importer of food. Since the terrorist attacks here in 2001, we've talked a little about the safety of the food supply, but has there been any serious discussion about the necessity—for national security—of being able to grow enough food to feed ourselves both now and in the future?

Not that I know of. I think there really is something like a national insanity, and this fiction we have that we are living in a service and knowledge economy is insane—just horribly misleading and dangerous. Because of course we live in, and from, the land economy. We have no choice; there's no escape from the land economy. From eating. From needing clothing. From needing shelter and warmth. The fossil fuels come from the land economy and they can't come from anywhere else. There are hard-headed realists now who think you're a sentimentalist for talking this way—a bucolic idiot. But of course you're not, as I have to keep reminding myself.

There are several of us who have been insistent for a long time that if you want to eat you've got to have land to produce the food from, and you have to have people who know how to make the land produce, and people moreover who know how to take care of the land in production—if you want to keep eating. And we've been involved in a kind of exercise in futility. It's been clear for a long time that the powers that be are not going to hear this argument—that they are not going to be reachable by the mere sanity of saying that we live from the land economy. Still, one is called upon to keep saying it. But maybe it's instructive to be thrown back repeatedly on the need to make an act of faith, and one shouldn't complain.

You continue to teach high-school students occasionally, and you have grandchildren whose education you're deeply interested in. How should we educate our children in a world that is so often pushing them where we don't want them to go? Are there certain subjects we need to teach? Is there too much school and not enough time at home?

Well, that's a decent starting place. There is too much school and not enough time at home. Not enough time with parents. There's not enough working with parents. But we've invented a world now in which it's often dangerous to work with parents, or parents aren't available, or parents can't have their children on the job. Nevertheless, to have committed other people's lives to this world, as you have your children's, is an extremely serious thing, and it establishes a priority that people don't think about until they have children.

I think that the issue of education really does need to be re-

ransacked. You know the Amish don't educate their children formally past the eighth grade. But this doesn't keep the Amish from learning as much as they are capable of learning, and some of them are capable of learning quite a lot. For instance, there are Amish factories that are run by eighth-grade-educated Amishmen who have taught themselves enough mathematics and physics to calculate gear ratios and to design complex manufacturing procedures. They are capable of mastering as much mechanical engineering as they need. They don't have to bring in a mechanical engineer to solve their problems for them. That to me is a kind of a marker. That brings into question our now rather facile assumption that everybody needs to be at least a bachelor of arts.

You make this argument explicitly in Hannah Coulter, that college ruins the son of Hannah's who was most suited to and most loved farming.

It's a story that happens over and over. I also had in mind the kids who become biologists because they love the outdoors, and they end up computer modeling, or in molecular biology. I've been increasingly convinced that the careerist/professionalist paradigm is dead. You just can't assume, as I think a lot of college professors still assume, that if you merely pursue your specialty your work will be used for good. I just don't think that is assumable any longer.

I don't think the education industry has been asking the essential question: What must we teach? What do we owe the young? It's *not* just a good living, and it's *not* just employability. It's *not* just job training. What do we owe them that can possibly prepare them for the experience of living in an unpredictable world? The education industry doesn't accept the inherent tragedy of that. We don't know enough to teach the young. We don't even know enough to decide what they need to know. But we've got to make a gamble. We're going to be surprised, they're going to be surprised; we know that.

That idea we had back in the 60's and 70's that everything had to be "relevant" was a joke on this subject. Nobody knew what was going to be relevant. Nobody ever knows what is going to be relevant. The question is, how do you prepare young people for a world in which *anything* might turn out to be relevant? We've come probably to the necessary conclusion, tragic and foolish as it may be, that we have to require them to learn certain things. But we haven't backed up to the point at which we can suffer those decisions as they need to be suffered. Certain things are going to be required. But then certain things are going to happen in anyone's experience that weren't foreseen by their teachers.

I'm working a morning a week now with [his two youngest grandchildren] Emily and Marshall. And when I say "working with them" I mean I work and they work. There are little cross-references occasionally. They say, "How do you spell so-and-so?" or I say, "Did you see that great blue heron that just flew up the river?" And those are teaching situations. But I'm not the taskmaster; I don't make the assignment.

I can't say that I'm teaching a great deal, but the situation is relaxed to some extent, and it's structured at least to the extent that they feel obliged, since I'm at work, to be at work. What will come of it I'm not sure. Eventually I'll assign them a book to read, and we'll talk about it. I did that with [granddaughters] Katie and Virginia. We'd talk about *King Lear* and at the end of our conversation they'd get up and give me a kiss and say,

"Goodbye, Granddaddy," and be off.

I had that kind of education in farming to a considerable extent. I learned a lot of extra stuff, wonderful stories, wonderful talk, wonderful English. I was being taught but as a rule nobody was trying to teach me. Sometimes very demanding lessons were taught. Sometimes somebody was trying to teach me, and did.

Would you give an example?

An example is in a poem that I wrote. There used to be Hop Club dances around here. They would be held in a high-school gym, or in the old dance hall over at the Oddfellows Park in Eminence. They'd start at ten o'clock at night, they'd end at two or three o'clock in the morning; quite a lot of liquor would be consumed; lots of very interesting dancing would be performed and, you know, there were added attractions. Maybe there'd be a breakfast afterward at somebody's house. One time I went through the whole gamut of one of those nights and presented myself to work in tobacco cutting the next day. My employer (who was in fact my teacher) never paid any mind to me at all. I got in in time to sleep maybe an hour; he waked me up as if it were any other morning. He went out ahead of me as usual and expected me to follow, and I made my way through that terrible day. It got up into the evening, with still a long way to go, and I became aware that he'd stopped to watch me fumbling along. After a while he said, "That social life don't get down the row, does it, boy?"

Who was this?

It was Owen Flood [a neighbor and friend, now deceased], who was having a marvelous time. It was one of the best days of his life, I imagine. But you know it was profoundly instructive, the way he did it. It was an educational work of genius, really.

They say you learn by doing—or in this case by not doing.

By being unable to do, almost, and yet having to do. And I think that what the education industry has not thought of is the kind of education that simply takes advantage of opportunities in the shared life. For that, there has to be a shared life; parents and children and neighbors have to be sharing their life, and then beautiful times occur in the midst of work. Suddenly everybody's having a good time; suddenly everybody's having something good to say; suddenly something awfully funny has happened, maybe to you, and you're the hero of the story everybody's telling. We need to pay attention to those things, for they can be profoundly instructive as well as profoundly pleasurable.

I think maybe sports teams experience that. Coaches probably are laying for teaching opportunities: "Now do you see what you did just then?" Or if you're a freshman English teacher and you at all know what you're doing, you know you can't *make* good work happen; you're just standing by to say, "Now do you see what you did? That's the way it ought to have been done. If you've done it once you can do it again." Essentially you're reduced to two sentences: One is, *That ain't it*, and the other is, *That's it*. And parents are fixed that way, too: "Did you see how you did that? That was right. Remember how it felt to do it right." My daddy used to say, "Now you see

that?”—and he’d point to a good bunch of cattle on a good pasture. “Don’t forget it. Remember that and you’ll always know what’s good.”

You’ve been writing professionally for close to 50 years. A lot has changed in that time. In areas of particular interest to you, outside of your family, has anything changed for the better?

Oh yes. Things have changed for the better, but the better is not in any way near to a win. There is a kind of alliance in this country of people who want to take care of things—children, dark nights, the land, good architecture, forests, ecosystems, rivers, and so on. I don’t know the degree of competence there is in this movement. I don’t feel much assurance that we know how to take care of much of anything over the long haul. But the sense that things need to be taken care of is growing, and it’s a good thing.

and the father went to the supermarket to buy a ham and realized he couldn’t afford it. It was an epiphany. He realized that he had to control more of his economy. He was merely working as a sort of slave for the corporations because he didn’t control processing or marketing. So they’ve started processing and marketing locally their own and their neighbors’ livestock, and they’re doing well.

Is this family running a small slaughterhouse?

They were farming, and they realized they had to add value to what they produced; they realized they had to sell directly to customers. Then they reached a point at which they saw they could buy the small processing plant that they were using. And what is most impressive to me is that they’re hiring local people: Their neighbors are working for them, their son-in-law is working for them, their son; they’re processing meat and furnishing jobs. This is *real* “job creation”—because it’s local; it’s happening among neighbors. Their clientele has grown to the point where they can’t supply the demand from their own land, so they’re processing meat for their neighbors also. They’re not trying to buy their neighbors out; they’re saying, “Come and join us; this will help you and you can help us.”

What’s really interesting, and what we have to latch onto and understand, is that this is an example of a cooperative economy. We’ve been taught to think that the only economic virtue is competitiveness. This is a faith: I’ll get into it for all I’m worth, seeking the maximum advantage for myself; and then you’ll get into it for all you’re worth, seeking the maximum advantage for yourself; and then this will result in good—which is a preposterous notion. The other way, and we have to learn this from scratch, is the way of cooperation or neighborliness: people asking what they can do for one another that will be mutually helpful.

There are good things going on. When hope sets out in its desperate search for reasons, it can find them now. It can find people who know what they’re doing. When the impact of expensive energy finally lands on us, we have to hope that we’ll have the teachers and the examples that we need.

Wes Jackson [of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas] and I have been conducting a conversation about cheap energy for a long time. Take almost anything you can think of, subtract cheap petroleum from it, and try to imagine what you’ve got left. The education industry, for example, is solidly founded on cheap petroleum. Almost everything you can name, if you subtract cheap petroleum from it, either it disappears or it changes radically. So we’re going to need teachers.

My guests and I had a pretty interesting conversation yesterday about whether we need to be evangelistic about the available solutions. I said no, because when you’re being evangelistic you’re oversimplifying. Evangelists are wanting people to join the Church, not to live a Christian life. So what you have to do is go ahead and do what you know how to do, and do it as well as you can, and then be there to answer questions when people realize they need your answers. Otherwise, you’re oversimplifying, and that just won’t do. That’s wrong.

I’ve understood that my job as an advocate has been to speak of the issues in something like their real complexity. People have assumed that eating is a very simple business, and I’ve been 40 years trying to explain that it’s really a complex business. It starts way, way back before the dinner table—even before farming there are questions that have to be dealt with. 

Take almost anything you can think of, subtract cheap petroleum from it, and try to imagine what you’ve got left. The education industry, for example, is solidly founded on cheap petroleum.

We’re really stuck now with this word *sustainable*. We haven’t sustained anything for very long. We’ve been here in Kentucky for 230-some-odd years now since the first settlers, and we’ve lived at a very considerable cost to our place. There’s much less soil here than there was when we came; the great forests are gone; a lot of coal has gone; God knows how much farm produce has gone, and a lot of soil with it; the land and water quality are worse. So we can’t say we’ve sustained much. But we’ve got to use the word; we’ve got to talk about sustainability. That’s a good thing; that’s an improvement.

We’ve got these care-taking organizations, as I’ll call them, and if you’re familiar with the politics of these organizations you know there’s a lot of discouraging things going in them—territoriality, competition for grants. A lot of people who are on the same side are competing with one another. There’s an infamous competition between the farmers and ranchers and the conservationists. They’ve got the same enemies, there’s every reason to cooperate, and yet they have this cherished animosity. But the organizations also are doing good work. Necessary things are getting accomplished. People are learning. The conversation is expanding.

There was a father and mother and daughter and son-in-law here yesterday who have a family business up in Indiana. Their thinking is clear; their work is good; they’re succeeding. They were getting I believe nine cents a pound for their hogs,

THE WAR ON TERROR

Are We Winning or Losing?

Four hard-hitting and candid panels that reveal where America truly stands in her "War on Terror."

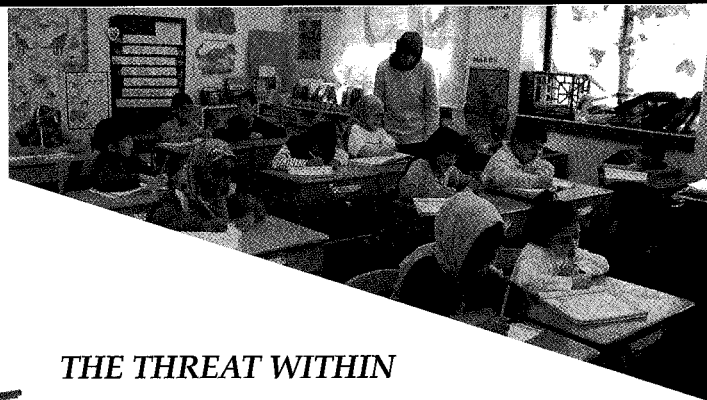
THE FAILURE OF THE WEST

The Return of the Ottomans

While Europe and the United States clamor for the allegedly modern, secular state of Turkey to join the European Union, the last six human-rights advisors to the Turkish government have resigned in protest of their government's anti-Christian policies. Learn about the real Turkey and the chilling historical context from Dr. Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*.

Selling Muhammad the Rope

Col. Ronald Hatchett, former Reagan Administration arms negotiator, questions American antiterrorist rhetoric in light of a history of one foreign-policy blunder after another in the Middle East, arming and subsidizing people who hate America.



THE THREAT WITHIN

Legislative Reform Versus Jihad

Dr. Stephen Presser, *Chronicles*' legal-affairs editor and Raoul Berger chair of legal history at Northwestern University Law School, asks if the PATRIOT Act accords with the American legal tradition and finds enthusiasm in unexpected quarters for interpretations of the law that would support aggressive, proactive antiterrorist policies.

Islamic Cells in the Heartland

Scott P. Richert, executive editor of *Chronicles*, discusses the alarming growth of Islamic schools in America's heartland, looks at curricula designed to form the next generation of jihadists, and asks, "Can *sharia* happen here?"

CLOSING THE DOOR

Immigration and Terrorism

Wayne Allensworth, intelligence analyst and native Texan, paints a grim picture of America's southern border and the current administration's failure to acknowledge, much less address, a problem that is no longer simply a matter of culture or economics but of national security.

Learning From Canada's Mistakes

Ambassador James Bissett, former director of the Canadian Immigration Service, describes the effects that Canada's appallingly lax citizenship laws have on the security of all of North America, forcing him to conclude that Canadian efforts in the War on Terror are little more than "feeble."

WEAK LINKS IN THE WAR ON TERROR

With Allies Like These . . .

Dr. Srdja Trifkovic, director of The Rockford Institute's Center for International Affairs, considers the War on Terror in light of American foreign policy in the Balkans, where independence for Kosovo and the centralization of Bosnia-Herzegovina threaten to facilitate the spread of *jihad* into the heart of Europe.

Washington's Failed Policy in the War on Terror

Thomas W. Pauken, former chairman of the Republican Party of Texas, looks at the wholesale takeover of American foreign policy by the neoconservatives and proposes a plan for a restoration of authentic conservative politics.



Special introductory price (includes shipping & handling):

Audiotapes \$30.00

CDs \$35.00

To order, please call Cindy Link at (800) 383-0680.

Mention code R05CFIAWOTS for tapes
or code R05CFIAWOTSCD for CDs.

The Reign of Grantham

by Derek Turner

"The results of political changes are hardly ever those which their friends hope or their foes fear."

—T.H. Huxley

Paradoxes of Power: Reflections on the Thatcher Interlude

by Alfred Sherman

Exeter: Imprint Academic;
184 pp., \$34.90

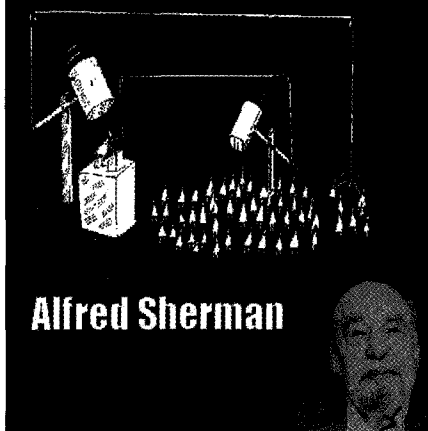
Media commentators covering David Cameron's incumbency as Tory leader have remarked—often gleefully—on how unpopular Cameron's Labour-like policies are with the "traditional right." By this, they mean the Thatcherite rump of the party (probably still the numerical majority), whose elected representatives were beneficiaries of the Thatcher phenomenon and whose rank-and-file activists still look back fondly to the halcyon days of the 1980's, when it looked as if the Conservatives had become "the natural party of government." Sir Alfred Sherman's book is a salutary reminder that, although Thatcherism drew on Tory precedents, it was never really "traditional" at all—and was, in fact, regarded as so radical when it first emerged in the 1970's that it was very nearly stillborn.

Sherman tells a fascinating story of how a woman of no great profundity or charisma, and wholly without connections in the Tory "old boy network," arose from provincial obscurity to lead the party, and then the country, of Canning, Disraeli, Salisbury, and Churchill. Behind this remarkable story is another, even more remarkable one—how a handful of intel-

Derek Turner is the editor of *Right Now!*, published in London.

Paradoxes of Power

Reflections on the Thatcher Interlude



lectuals put her there, despite an in-built Tory bias against systematic thinking and toward monumental institutional inertia. This book is as much an engrossing human-interest story as it is a fascinating record of the metapolitics of that period, or a wise animadversion on today's political realities.

Alfred Sherman was born to Jewish parents in London's East End in 1919. Like many of his background and that period, he lined up on the ultraleft side in the epic confrontations of the 1930's:

We inherited a bleak world after 1918; the optimism generated by the Victorian age was dissipated. We sought new utopias . . . we were a transitional phenomenon, having lost much of our inherited Jewish identity and values without fully acquiring and internalising British ones . . . when we deserted the God

of our fathers, we were bound to go whoring after strange gods.

At 17, Sherman found himself in Spain, manning a machine gun on the Republican side. Enrollment in the Republican ranks gave the young man "a sense of belonging which British society had failed to do and all the greater the sense of loss after its collapse."

"De-communization" was a gradual process, borne of the realization that "the communist dream was an example of self-deception beyond repair" and that "socio-economic processes had an autonomy of their own which could be influenced . . . by intervention based on human understanding." Sherman also became aware of the "continued relevance of national and religious questions." His postwar experience as the *Observer's* Belgrade correspondent further undermined his faith in the viability of Marxist theory.

Sherman's early affiliations nevertheless had a major impact on his later activities. "I learned to think big, to believe that, aligned with the forces of history, a handful of people with sufficient faith could move mountains." Many members of what was to become known as the New Right were likewise former socialists; these became disproportionately influential, as they added the Marxian habit of structured thinking to the existing Tory tradition of quiet utopianism, defined by Sherman as "the rule of moderation, common sense, justice and precedent" (which are indeed, he notes laconically, "much to hope for"). It was this combination that enabled former firebrands to capture—at least partially and tempo-

rarily—the former party of “Church and King” and bowler-hatted respectability.

In the 1960’s, Sherman met Sir Keith Joseph, a businessman who had inherited a baronetcy from his father, done wonderfully well studying law at Harrow and Oxford, entered Parliament after the war, and held a post as a junior government minister from 1962 to 1964. Joseph seemed to be a typical Conservative of that period, albeit exceptionally intellectually curious. (In a touching *aperçu*, Sherman recounts how Joseph injured his neck by carrying around enormous quantities of books to feed his hungry mind.) After asking Sherman for advice on a speech, he took Sherman as his “tutor and psychological prop,” as the book’s editor, Mark Garnett, puts it. In 1969-70, he made several speeches on economics, written by Sherman, that broke with the economic orthodoxies of the time. These were the first shots in what was to become known as the “Thatcherite” offensive—which perhaps really should, as Sherman plaintively suggests, be called “Shermanism.”

When Sherman, Joseph, and a few others began to make their presence felt, they met with dogged internal resistance. At that time, the Conservatives still looked back somewhat to the “good old days,” although they were now led by Ted Heath. With the creation of the welfare state, there was, after 1945, a tendency on the part of successive Tory hierarchies to temporize, and some Tories thought that the welfare state was the logical continuation of aristocratic ideals of patronage and *noblesse oblige*. There was, as Sherman famously said, “a ratchet effect” whereby Labour-government measures were never rescinded by incoming Conservative governments, thus shifting the center of gravity of British life ever leftward. Tory politicians were often unwilling or unable even to analyze what was happening, let alone to do anything about it. The Conservative Party had been extraordinarily successful in the electoral sense for much of its history and had accordingly become complacent, but its results were always based on “sentiment rather than logic.”

After the Tories were defeated in February 1974, Heath finally permitted Joseph to set up the new think tank he had long wanted and which Sherman saw as an “animator, agent of change, and political enzyme.” And so the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) was founded, to “think the unthinkable, question the unques-

tioned.” The CPS soon began to make waves, first by a June 1974 speech written by Sherman and delivered by Keith Joseph (reproduced as an Appendix to this book), which stated baldly that Britain had the lowest productivity of any country in northwestern Europe and implied that previous Conservative policy had been mistaken—a theme Joseph went on to develop in successive speeches, after the warm encouragement he received for this first foray. Joseph then asked Margaret Thatcher—already spotted by Sherman—to become deputy CPS chairman. The CPS went on to produce a blizzard of influential papers and booklets, and so the scene was set for the Thatcherite revolution. Sherman referred to himself and his colleagues as “Argonauts” in search of the golden fleece of fiscal rectitude and social responsibility. For a time, conservatism actually became exciting, thanks to this *Mitteleuropäisch* leavening, even if most of the emphasis was on economic matters. In this book, Sherman goes into considerable detail about the CPS’s more important recruits and ideas.

By 1983, the momentum had run out, and Alfred Sherman was “summarily dismissed from the CPS and black-listed” after Mrs. Thatcher had been lobbied by an anti-Sherman coalition. These wounds are still acutely sensitive. Sherman is lastingly resentful of the way in which he was expelled from the CPS (he sees his knighthood as a kind of golden goodbye) and of the fact that he has been largely forgotten by all but a few specialists. This comes out most obviously in his reference to Shirley Letwin’s 1992 book, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, in which he features only fleetingly—“a reminder,” he says bitterly, “that ‘unpersoning’ and perversion of history is not confined to Communists.” But such forgetfulness is surely inevitable in so resolutely unintellectual an ambience as the Conservative Party.

The Tories of that period were often accused of being economic reductionists—as, indeed, some of them were (and are). At least Joseph, Sherman, and Thatcher were aware that, as Sherman neatly puts it, “The rationality of the market is genuine, but it constitutes the lowest form of rationality.” So, in October 1974, Keith Joseph delivered a speech in Edgbaston calling for the buttressing of family values and decrying the rise in single-parent families, which had led to “delinquency, truancy, vandalism, hoo-

liganism, illiteracy, decline in educational standards.” He spoke the unpalatable truth that, “For the first time in a century and a half . . . areas of our cities are becoming unsafe for peaceful citizens by night, and some even by day.” This speech was anathematized by the left, causing Joseph to backtrack and apologize, and he never really recovered his nerve. Like Margaret Thatcher, Joseph wanted to rewrite the political rule book, whereas Sherman, by contrast, wanted to burn it (as Garnett notes).

This is a supremely disciplined book, in which a great deal of great worth gets said within a small and elegant compass. The author’s lively phraseology elevates what could so easily have been a dull, self-satisfied work. A few aphoristic examples must suffice to give the flavor. Parliamentary democracies have the tendency to overspend, Sir Alfred says, because “Posterity has no electorate.” On trade unionism at that time: “Trade union activities became a form of reverse entrepreneurship, where militancy both gave emotional satisfaction and provided opportunities for social mobility.” And, on the end of the Thatcher regime: “Mrs. Thatcher’s fall from power was not only that of a person, but of a personality.” He also manages to incorporate flashes of acerbic humor. After Joseph’s Edgbaston speech, he received supportive mail from, among many others, Lord (Laurence) Olivier, “whose own record as a family man,” says Sherman drily, “was somewhat mixed.” The 364 economists who signed a famous letter attacking the Tories’ 1981 budget are “the priests of Baal.”

Like many highly intelligent people, Sir Alfred Sherman is not an especially easy man to warm to. Many of the problems he experienced must have stemmed from his resolute, unclubbable nature and his absolute refusal to tolerate fools. I was present at a dinner party at which he and another guest argued loudly about public transport for what must have been 20 minutes, drowning out other conversation and leaving the rest of us sitting around looking at one another awkwardly. His interest in ideas has always overridden all other considerations.

Even those whom he admired, and with whom he forged indissoluble links, are gored and tossed gratuitously. Sherman complains of Margaret Thatcher’s “general tendency to reserve her harshest decisions for her friends,” yet he does

the same himself. She is, he says, "a woman of beliefs, not ideas . . . I never heard her express an original idea or even ask an insightful question. She has left no memorable sayings." Elsewhere, Sherman writes that "at Oxford she did not shine," and "she was no judge of character." As for Keith Joseph, he had an "unoriginal" mind and was "the antithesis of a leader," suffering from a "lack of robustness and fighting spirit." It is just as well for Thatcher and Joseph that he was a friend. It is a testament to Lady Thatcher's graciousness that she endorsed this book and gave a warm little speech on the occasion of its launch at the CPS offices last year.

There are some adventitious similarities between Sherman and America's neoconservatives, yet the differences are far more important. Sherman is distinguishable from these by his greater intelligence, his breadth of historical vision rooted in the classics, and his deep knowledge of political thought. (*Paradoxes of Power* is peppered with philosophical allusions, from Einstein to Hegel and Ortega y Gasset.) Unlike the neoconservatives, too, he has long been sympathetic to Christian culture and concerned about immigration (he caused a storm in the early 1980's when he invited Jean-Marie Le Pen to attend a Conservative conference) and is sceptical about the efficacy, as well as the desirability, of exporting democracy. Indeed, Sir Alfred sees America as a well-meaning but rather naive and ineffectual force in world affairs. As he says, "The world is too big to fit into a single ideology." Fluent in both Hebrew and Arabic, he has a shrewd idea of what can and what cannot be done in the Middle East. He has as well a long-standing interest in the politics of the Balkans. During the break-up of Yugoslavia, Sherman was one of a very small minority of intellectuals who took the Serbian side, seeing the Serbs as a Christian bulwark against Islam.

But despite his multifarious gifts and insights, there was only so much Sir Alfred Sherman could do during his subterranean sojourn at the heart of British political life. It is no criticism of him to say that, economics aside, the years 1979-1990 now look like a record of wasted opportunities. Successive Conservative administrations spent so much time tackling the trade unions, and selling off industries and council housing, that whole swathes of British life and

society—such as education, the arts, U.K.-E.U. relations, Anglo-Scottish relations, race relations, and ecological concerns—were left open to the orc-raiders of the left. Mrs. Thatcher was always preoccupied with the likes of Arthur Scargill and General Galtieri (Sherman, incidentally, had considerable influence during the Falklands crisis, advising the prime minister several times) and always hamstrung by intrigue and backstabbing from within her own party. The ambitious rethinking of *all* policy areas that Sherman and a few others could see to be urgently necessary "was postponed *sine die*," with consequences we are doomed to live through.

And even when it comes to the economic record, there were things that could have been handled better. For instance, the mining and shipbuilding industries certainly needed to be reformed and/or privatized, but was it necessary to let them down so abruptly? Feelings of ownership and identification were associated with these industries in areas where they had been the chief livelihood, sometimes for many centuries. The political fallout from the actions of those years has ensured that whole areas of Scotland, Wales, and northern England have become Tory-free zones. And there should have been stronger safeguards to ensure that strategically important industries—and the utilities, and farming—did not pass into foreign control or become subjected to the dictates of the global market. Some of the willy-nilly privatization of those years was, indeed, as the left complained, "selling off the family silver" (although they themselves were largely responsible for changing that silver into base metal). And Sherman does admit that "privatisation has turned out to be a mixed blessing," as the money raised by that device was often used to fund other areas of state expenditure, and that the community charge (a.k.a. the poll tax) was politically misguided.

But the point of this book is not to pine about the Thatcher years; there is a much sharper focus. Sherman has written in the belief that much of the effort of that era may have been in vain. Although "the New Right has swept the board as far as economic theory is concerned . . . [it] has been sidelined at government level." Public spending has not decreased under the Major or Blair administrations—quite the contrary—and Britain's legislators and opinion formers have not developed the habit of intellectual discipline. In short,

"We are back to where we started." Insofar as Mrs. Thatcher had an impact, it was mainly an invisible, "negative" one, whereby even a seemingly unstoppable Labour government has not sought to re-introduce wage-and-price controls or to make grand economic plans.

Within David Cameron's Tory Party, there is little evidence of the "distinctive Conservative criteria" that Sherman sees to be so sorely needed. As with the pre-Thatcher Tories, there still is a tendency to temporize with the *status quo* rather than to challenge it. As Cameron has said in a recent interview, "I love the Britain we have now." Now, as then, Tory machine politicians judge policies by their electoral acceptability. Now, as then, the party is run by moderates with "a low panic threshold." Now, as then, there is essentially no right-of-center party in mainstream British politics.

If this situation does not change, a new party, or an amalgam of existing smaller parties in alliance with rebel Tories, may emerge. As Sherman reminds us, "There is a populist mood abroad . . . defensive and plebeian, anti-authority yet authoritarian." He obviously thinks this spirit could yet be tapped by the Conservatives, if only there were to arise a new type of conservative thinking that would confront

the national question (or questions), relations between ethnically diverse communities, with the US, the EU and the Commonwealth, the role of Christianity . . . a reassessment of human nature, the roots of crime and social breakdown, scope and limits of market-oriented economics and of government action in society.

Fat chance, one might think. Yet, if someone such as Sherman thinks these things worth saying, then perhaps all is not lost. Things may change very quickly in politics.

Meanwhile, Sir Alfred Sherman has done an enormous amount for his country and for the conservative cause—and he tried to do a great deal more. This record of his struggles and collection of his reflections really should be read by all of those interested in statecraft and conservative politics and who are, as well, concerned for the future of Britain. His book proves that, within his 86-year-old frame, there still beats the heart of an ardent 17-year-old, manning his machine gun in the defense of an idealistic England. ☞

Ariadne's Ball

by Claude Polin

La Belle France: A Short History

by Alistair Horne

New York: Knopf, 512 pp., \$30.00

There are innumerable topics of historical study, but an historian has, I believe, to choose among three styles of history.

The first, seemingly the most popular among academics these days, concentrates on facts (*i.e.*, physical evidence). The difficulty with this history is its avowed loathing of any interpretation of the facts by the historian; the facts are supposed to speak for themselves.

Unfortunately, any given item becomes historical fact only when related in an intelligible way to others; every history is a story. The past has left an infinite number of traces, however, so that a purely factual history amounts to an endless recording of an infinite number of tidbits without beginning or end. This is so obvious that the average academic generally ends up selecting from that ocean of tidbits some that he deems more important than others and which are apt to lend some kind of order to their mass. But then, here stops the historian who postures as scientific, halfway between merely tape recording the sound and fury of the world and regarding that world as a book that needs to be deciphered (whether men be the unwitting tools of some hidden hand or of some inner logic that carries them onward, even as they perceive it as a product of their will).

This is, in part, exactly what Alistair Horne does. For the sake of brevity, I will take only one example of his approach: the reign of Louis XIV. Reading through his pages, we learn that the young Louis XIV had to flee a revolution endangering the throne (1652); the same year, reentered a Paris in shambles; chastened the parliament with his famous "*L'état c'est moi*" (1655); ended the wars with Spain (1659); and entered Paris again triumphantly as a newlywed (1660). He then proceeded to eliminate his minister of finance (1661) before starting on a long train of love affairs and suffering over the poison scandal (1670), which did not prevent him from embarking the country on a course of remarkable prosperity under Colbert

(though "the majority of Frenchmen underwent an era of hardship full of despair and untimely death"). Next came the building of Versailles (1682), where Louis le Grand appears in his utmost splendor and vitality (his bowels were later discovered to be twice the normal length), as well as the renovation of Paris (fortifications were raised to lay out the Champs Elysées) and the modernization of the police, aimed at making the capital safer. While the poor suffered, the affluent engaged in gambling as well as theater going (a passion of Louis XIV). The king patronized well-known literary figures, and 600 novels were published in Paris between 1660 and 1700. Yielding to his passion for glory and also his greed, he had started (1672) a series of disastrous wars, while his second wife's piety induced him to persecute his own Huguenot elite brutally (1685), as well as the "holier than Jesuit" Jansenists. Finally, splendid boredom settled on Versailles while Europe was becoming French. But the French armies were defeated by Marlborough, and the common people froze and starved to death, even as the king's heirs (daughter, granddaughter-in-law, brother, son, and grandson) died of various diseases. Louis became depressed and soon succumbed to gangrene. He had shown himself to be "the most absolute of absolute monarchs."

All this is well worth knowing (even if, some decades ago, every French 11th grader knew as much), but it ends up leaving the reader somehow mired in the middle of a huge swamp of facts.

If this is all history is about, we may say that it is fun at the beginning, but you can only take so much of it. To refer only to Mr. Horne's choice of events: It would probably be more interesting to see the restlessness of the high nobility coupled with that of the Paris parliament; the wealth and power of the finance minister (topping those of the king himself); the Jansenists' doubting the validity of anything human, including monarchical institutions; or the Huguenots having their own towns and provinces and threatening to become a state within a state. All these events, to which many more could be added, can be seen as different manifestations of what was perceived by Louis as the same threat, that of disintegration of the whole kingdom. Or to see that his wars were not necessarily the result of his passions but the product of his ambition to unify the territory of France into a solid whole. Nothing new in this; it was the policy pursued by 35 kings of France be-

fore Louis XIV. Unfortunately, there were two ways of bringing unity to the kingdom: by federating the amazing diversity of regional energies, which had been the only aim of many of Louis's predecessors, or by clamping some kind of uniformity upon diversity—by centralizing all powers or by channeling them, which was his ambition. Now, when one realizes that France used to comprise more or less independent provinces, each with its own history, customs, even language, it had to be a waste to try to disrupt all this moral and material wealth in the name of unity, and a delicate balance should have been attained between unity and diversity. (This view was still defended by French royalists only a century ago.) The true strength of this diversified land was its very diversity, the spirit of France obviously lying in the variety of its citizens, and the love of each one for his own particular region, symbolized by the quintessential French farmer's attachment to his small plot of land. So finally, there is a very good case to be made for Louis XIV being not a great king, the most illustrious of all kings of France, but one of the grave diggers of traditional France, a man who wanted to build too much and did not realize his job was also to preserve and conserve. Louis XIV, unknown to himself, was a revolutionary.

From time to time, the author seems to allude to some such Ariadne's ball of thread. Thus, we learn that the French monarchs had started on the path of absolutism since the days of Bouvines (1214), in contrast with the English Plantagenets bent on granting freedoms to their subjects. Or could it be that Anglo-French rivalry provides the link among centuries of French history? If this is the case, it remains to be seen whether what started, after all, as a family feud has anything to do with what ended as a more or less one-sided mistrust of a sea-faring and commercial nation toward a continental power always suspected of dreaming of casting England off from Europe. In any case, unraveling French history as if it were a sort of continuous drama does not seem to be Mr. Horne's main preoccupation.

All in all, he seems to be more interested in a third type of history, which he obviously relishes, and for which he shows an indisputable talent. If the reader does not drown under the torrent of facts flowing through the book, he will enjoy the exhibits provided by this historical cruise, much like a visitor going through Madame Tussaud's or a spectator viewing Sacha Guitry's film *Si Versailles m'était conté*.

Mr. Horne excels at rendering the atmosphere of a period (even though he deals rather freely with the chronology of the facts he uses to describe it). In each chapter, one is driven through an ever-changing landscape, full of vivid details—some funny, many gruesome (Mr. Horne has a weakness for sexy and gory scenes, naughty stories, and detailed accounts of the various ways of dismembering a human body)—and the author depicts characters with the lively intensity of a talented storyteller. (As he likes details, I should point out that Horne accumulates a long list of erroneous ones, from the color of Bismarck's uniform at the famous proclamation of the German Empire to Bergson's philosophy being positivistic, which is total nonsense. Also, his references to colloquial French are somewhat hazardous: I have never heard of "*droit de jambage*" but rather "*droit de cuissage*," which is rather more explicit; a *perron* has nothing to do with a train-station platform; and so forth.) The book obviously does its best not to appear too academic, and fully succeeds in this respect: There are more pages devoted, for instance, to the siege of Paris than to the history of the Second Empire, or to the revolutionary events of 1848 than to the period from 1815 to 1848.

All the same, it is difficult to feel entirely satisfied with the book as a whole, however you look at it. There is too much history for the reader avid for gore, and too much gore for the reader trying to understand what the history is all about. Readers should have been shown what *la Belle France* stands for. It is disputable to claim they should know how the lovers of Philippe le Bel's daughters-in-law were eviscerated, especially when it is not mentioned that the horrors of their deaths were necessary to impress the vulgar with the sacredness of the royal function. And it is rather hazardous for a serious historian to consider François Mitterand a great statesman ("a new start for France"). He should have waited a little bit to document this claim—to say the least.

We in the West are indeed in need of historical culture, which means particularly a vision of history that is encompassing enough to give us a sense of what we could and should stand for. History is about facts, and we need people to relate what happened—in the American Civil War, for instance. The need, however, is a lot more acute, I think, for historians who can place the Civil War in the general framework of what the United States of America is all about. Mr. Horne's en-

deavor is by all means to be praised. But we are still in need of a short history of *la Belle France*.

Corresponding editor Claude Polin is a professor at the University of Paris-Sorbonne.

Our Little Brown Brothers

by John Willson

Little Brown Brother

by Leon Wolff

Mechanicsburg, PA: History Book Club; 432 pp., \$21.99



The History Book Club has done us a good service by reprinting Leon Wolff's *Little Brown Brother*, published originally in 1960, before we had learned to be politically correct or had figured out that we were building an empire. In fact, in 1960, most of us had not realized that our foreign policy had been taken over by the ideology of liberal internationalism, or what Max Boot now wants to call "Conservative Internationalism."

How long ago was 1960? John F. Kennedy was accusing Richard Nixon and Dwight Eisenhower of being so soft on commies that they had allowed a "missile gap" to develop. Some voters actually believed him. One wishes that Kennedy had read Mr. Wolff's little classic instead of Michael Harrington's *The Other America* or the manual of empire produced by the Rockefeller brothers, *Prospect for America*.

Little Brown Brother is remarkable for winning the Parkman Prize of the Society of American Historians—while failing to contain a single footnote! The Introduction to the new edition, written by Paul A. Kramer of Johns Hopkins University, does have footnotes and criticizes Mr. Wolff for their absence. One might suspect that both Mr. Kramer and the History Book Club have other than good intentions in resurrecting this fine old volume. In fact, Mr. Kramer calls it a "crude" book. (It came out before the emergence of language police.) Leon Wolff was an old Progressive, given over to empathy with "little guys." He wrote this book to bring to light a story that had been buried for decades, as indicated by the sub-

title, "How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippine Islands at the Century's Turn." He tells it evenhandedly. Despite the invincible ignorance of President McKinley, the remarkable arrogance of Theodore Roosevelt, and the utter viciousness of the American military, Mr. Wolff does not make this historical episode into a morality play. It is not a tale of "little brown guys, good, and big white guys, bad."

The final demise of the Spanish Empire caught a lot of people by surprise. Germany, England, Russia, Japan, China, and the United States all had hard decisions to make and not much real knowledge to go on. A friend of mine, a good historian and observer of the Middle East, told me in 1991 that the United States had maybe 50 people who knew Arabic well enough to give good advice to the George H.W. Bush administration. I doubt that, in 1898, the United States had 50 people who could tell you *anything* specific about the Philippines.

And yet we "purchased and pacified" them after the fiasco of the Spanish-American War. Fewer than 400 Americans died "liberating" Cuba; over 4,000 died pacifying the Philippines. And we killed over 200,000 Filipinos. The total population of the islands was less than eight million. Henry Adams, still a good friend of Teddy Roosevelt, wrote, just as the slaughter was getting under way,

I fully share with [Senator] Hoar the alarm and horror of seeing poor weak McKinley . . . plunge into an inevitable war to conquer the Philippines contrary to every profession or so-called principle of our lives and history. I turn green in bed at midnight if I think of the horror of a year's warfare in the Philippines . . . where we must slaughter a million or two foolish Malays in order to give them the comforts of flannel petticoats and electric railways.

Mr. Wolff says that we came to the Philippines with the law in our hands, "and the law was progressive." Of course it was. To bring the blessings of "liberty" (we weren't yet calling ourselves a "democracy" very often) we had to deal with "insurgents." It did not seem to matter that

The Filipinos also suggested that the terms "insurgent" and *insurrecto* be abandoned by the Amer-

icans. They had been insurgents against Spain, but they were now independent and the Americans did not own them. The Americans continued to call them insurgents.

The rhetoric is creepy in its similarity to what took hold in the 1960's among Democrats, and to what comes out of Republican Washington today. The only difference is that President McKinley could call the beneficiaries of our liberty, with a straight face, "our little brown brothers."

Mr. Wolff says that the American people, even by 1960, "had not yet fully grasped the magnitude of the Philippine war effort or the ruthlessness with which it was being waged." Ruthless is the name of the game. James Kurth of Swarthmore and the Foreign Policy Research Institute recently said (I'm citing him from memory and not from a written text) that such successes as we have had in bringing the benefits of our liberty and prosperity to others have required the most destructive war in human history and the occupation of the losers' countries for over 50 years. Are we willing to take that on again? Should we have learned something from "our little brown brothers"?

John Willson is a professor of history, emeritus, at Hillsdale College.

The Grand Manner

by James O. Tate

**Moriz Rosenthal in Word and Music:
A Legacy of the Nineteenth Century**
edited by Mark Mitchell & Allan Evans
Bloomington: Indiana University Press;
185 pp., \$36.95

The culture war takes many forms — or, perhaps, we should say that the war has many fronts, and that the musical conflicts arising from this war are significant ones. Thus, we are convinced, when we approach a car that delivers a pounding reverb of bass, that the driver is not only cultivating a hearing loss that will solve one of his problems but committing an act of aggression and making a political statement by asserting such aural ugliness in public.

Ugliness has been a principle of modern art for quite some while. There was a

time when ugliness, or at least the affectation of novelty, was regarded as an attack on civilization, as, for example, at the premiere of *Le sacre du printemps* in the Paris of 1913. Nowadays, we may have to consider the possibility that beauty might also be a weapon, or a threat, to established order. Not long ago, I read about the manager of a mall in California who eliminated an infestation of hostile teenagers by piping in some classical music. The mall rats fled like rats. A few days later, I was rather astounded to emerge from my vehicle at a strip mall, only to hear in those bleak, unlovely, but at least empty environs the sound of the first movement of Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54. I figured someone had read the same news item I had — and, by the way, nice composition, that: It goes just great outdoors on the concrete and the asphalt with Toyotas and Hondas and Nissans and pizza slices and bagels and lottery tickets and trash cans.

To close the gap between our environment and the music that is displaced in it, we would have to go back in time somehow to grasp the 19th-century sensibility; and, if our vehicle cannot be Wells' time machine, then I do not know a better way than through Mitchell's and Evans' new book about Moriz Rosenthal, whose account of a nearly vanished cultural abundance is broad, varied, and convincing, and not only in matters musical (though, of course, for Rosenthal, piano music is primary).

Born in 1862, in what was then Lemberg in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Moriz Rosenthal was soon studying with Chopin's most important pupil, Karol Mikuli. Not long after, the family moved to Vienna so the boy could work with Rafael Joseffy, who had studied with Liszt and Tausig, and later he studied with Liszt himself. In his early days, Rosenthal seemed to have been a second Tausig, a master of technique and a powerhouse of strength and energy. But the flash factor was always modulated by the subtlety of rhythm and color he had absorbed from Mikuli and Joseffy, and by his native intelligence and taste. His travels and his encounters with Anton Rubinstein, Brahms, Mahler, Busoni, and many others, he wrote about himself. The letters, essays, and reminiscences that have been gathered by Mitchell and Evans amount to an autobiography supplemented by elaborate and scholarly chronologies, notes, and a discography.

These pages are also graced by a Preface by Charles Rosen, that eminent pianist and writer who was, at a young age, a

pupil of Moriz Rosenthal. Rosen has not only the memories of his experiences but the perspective to understand those memories of a man who played "like a gentleman." Rosen remembers sitting between Rosenthal and Josef Lhevinne at one of the last Carnegie Hall recitals by Josef Hofmann, and then being backstage with all three of them. I myself relished learning of Rosenthal's criticism of Von Bülow's tempo *some 60 years before* at a certain point in the fourth movement of the Chopin B minor Sonata, as I can well remember hearing Rosen play that piece superbly. (I was sitting next to the daughter of a pupil of Busoni when I heard it.)

Rosenthal was more than a great performer. He was a man who interrupted his career in order to study classics and philosophy, who spoke many languages, and who was a waspish wit, delighting in disputation. There are many instances of great humor and irony in his reflections, but I think also that there is, in another key, some awareness of the dialectic of history. Rosenthal had to leave Europe in the late 30's to escape the new barbarism and died in 1946 as an American citizen. The pattern of his life and the shape of the new dispensation had not escaped his notice — and about that, he did not joke.

He thought that something noble had vanished from Europe and the West, and he said so, identifying a turning point in World War I.

Among the many splendid things that the war killed, it killed the idea of personal bravery, of personal heroism. . . . The throb of splendor, of heroism, attendant upon the hazards of personal encounter in war, fell into the discard with the arrival of shrapnel and tanks. And a "tank and shrapnel" philosophy extends beyond the battlefield into every human act.

The spirit of postwar cynicism had crept into music making as well. How was the romantic repertory to be expounded in an alien and contradictory environment?

We know something about Rosenthal's answer from the old shellac recordings he made in the 20's and 30's, and even the 40's, some 17 of which are included on a CD that comes with this volume: The vivid sound images add much to the fullness of the 19th-century legacy. Rosenthal's Chopin Mazurkas are revelatory in their rhythmic freedom and flex. His Chopin Sonata in B minor has been deplored by

some, but not by me. I think it shows the structural thinking and the severity that put Rosenthal in a league with Busoni. The Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2, is a superior performance, and the Etude in C, Op. 10, No. 1, is the greatest historical version of that piece, and maybe even the greatest, period. These recordings and others will satisfy the curiosity that must be provoked by the opportunity here afforded; and, for that opportunity, we must acknowledge the informed and valuable work of Mark Mitchell and Allan Evans.

Contributing editor James O. Tate is a professor of English literature at Dowling College on Long Island.

Live Free! (Kill Your Lawn)

by Tobias Lanz

**American Green: The Obsessive
Quest for the Perfect Lawn**

by Ted Steinberg
New York: W.W. Norton & Co.;
295 pp., \$24.95

◆

Americans love their lawns. They spend \$40 billion per year—more than the gross national product of most countries—to create the perfect lawn. Taken together, all these lawns would cover the entire state of Kentucky. Lawns are everywhere, from trailer parks and executive mansions to businesses, churches, and recreational areas. American agronomists have created so many grass varieties that some types of lawn can be grown in all 50 states. The spread of lawns has steadily increased since World War II and has reached a frenzied peak during the last two decades, as aggressive suburbanization converts almost 400,000 acres of land per year to lawns.

Suburbanization is what really changed America's attitude toward grass. The rapid spread of housing and mass transportation driven by cheap oil and newfound wealth created a landscape revolution. What was once a preoccupation for the wealthy quickly became a universal status symbol for an upwardly mobile nation. Before the lawn revolution, the average yard was a concatenation of shrubs, trees,

weeds, and vegetable gardens, or simply plain dirt that was periodically swept. By the late 1950's, these odd and eccentric yards, which varied greatly according to region and climate, were increasingly being standardized by the spread of grass. Lawns became so large and widespread that they spawned an entire industry providing machines, watering systems, chemicals, publications, and professional services to manage them.

Steinberg presents a number of reasons why Americans became lawn-obsessed. Grass is soothing. The deep greens and soft textures may have been particularly appealing to 1950's America following a bloody world war and during an equally tense Cold War. Lawns are also comfortable and practical. Children and pets can romp, and adults relax, on the open turf. And they fit right into the postwar trend of the privatization of social life, providing a comfortable backyard retreat that replaced the front yard as the center of social activity. As Americans grew more isolated from their neighbors, the front lawn became a subtle, yet effective, formal barrier between house and street. And the better the lawn was maintained, the better the barrier. The lawn, furthermore, was the perfect outdoor outlet for Organization Man, who struggled all day in an increasingly complex world he had little control over. Once he fired up his lawn mower, however, he could achieve control and closure by trimming the flat expanse before him.

Because the lawn was a controlled environment, it was also a perfectible one. More fertilizer and watering, better equipment, or new grass varieties could always improve the turf. And for enthusiasts, the lawn became an obsession. The explosion of golf courses exemplifies this to the fullest. In America, there are 15,000 of these perfect lawns. Putting greens are the most meticulously managed landscapes in human history. Many require daily pampering. As a result, golf courses require armies of lawn-care specialists to maintain them and other parts of the course at optimum heights, hues, and textures. The more luxurious the course, the larger and more sophisticated the staff.

The obsession entails environmental costs. Golf courses are among the most polluted places in America because of the amount of chemicals they require. Most, the author quips, would actually qualify as toxic-waste sites. But a lush, green lawn looks natural and inviting, masking its deadly support system. Golf courses also use exorbitant amounts of water—

especially problematic in desert climates where grasses are alien to the ecosystem. Some require almost 200,000 gallons per day, the equivalent of the normal water needs of 2,200 people. The same goes on a smaller yet more widespread scale at the neighborhood level, because of the watering and chemical requirements of 60 million household lawns.

More serious health hazards are associated with lawn equipment. There are 80,000 injuries and hundreds of deaths every year, most from lawn-mower accidents. The whirring blades of a rotary mower release three times the energy of a .357 magnum, a gun that can project a bullet through an engine block. Naturally, accident rates are highest among lawn-care workers, mostly low-paid and unskilled illegal immigrants nowadays, who operate large, complex, and dangerous machines on a daily basis. The lawn-and-garden industry has one of the highest death rates of any profession—15 per 100,000—higher even than that of police officers!

Ted Steinberg is an environmental historian, yet *American Green* is anything but academic. It is good social history, written in a humorous and engaging style. The author is at his best when revealing interesting facts and anecdotes, especially about people. He writes of the men who built billion-dollar lawn conglomerates such as Scotts, ChemLawn, and TruGreen (the latter two are now both owned by ServiceMaster) from small businesses. And there are the many lawn fanatics such as the Floridian who transformed his entire backyard into an exact replica of the 12th hole of the Augusta National Golf Club. And the California billionaire who paid tens of thousands of dollars in fines to water his lawn illegally during a drought year. (His obsession was finally halted by the city when he attempted to have water delivered to his home by tanker truck.)

The author alludes to some of the deeper social and philosophical aspects of the American lawn obsession, though without developing these ideas fully. Steinberg considers Organization Man and his need for lawn control. Yet the lawn is really a symbol of a deeper trend in modern life—the desire to rationalize and standardize everything. Suburbia is the ultimate example of this social experiment: As it represents the standardization of culture, so its lawns amount to the standardization of nature. Like suburbia, the lawn is wholly dependent on big business for chemicals and machines and on big government for cheap water and agronomic

research to develop new and better turf.

Steinberg also omits the political dimension of lawn expansion. The lawn grew in tandem with empire. Everything about the lawn is based on the global reach of American power and the spread of markets. Lawn equipment is almost all of Japanese construction, and hand tools are made in China. The majority of lawn-care workers are illegal Hispanic immigrants. Even lawn grass is not American — most varieties were developed in Asia. But the most important global connection of the lawn industry is its dependence on cheap and abundant foreign oil. From the mowers, blowers, weed whackers, and trucks to petrochemical-based fertilizers (all in plastic bags), the lawn industry depends on this resource.

Interestingly, the American South was the last region to capitulate to the lawn cult. Grass was only good if you had livestock to feed. Even today, the South is known for its shabby or nonexistent lawns. Lawns are mowed periodically to keep down the mosquitoes. They are also good places to park your car or clean fish. This makes sense, because the South was the last place to resist empire. But this, too, is changing in the New South, where spacious lawns grace tract mansions and patio homes from Richmond to Hous-

ton. The South has arrived, and so have the neoconservatives whose perfect new lawns are slowly replacing the mossy old weed patches of another era.

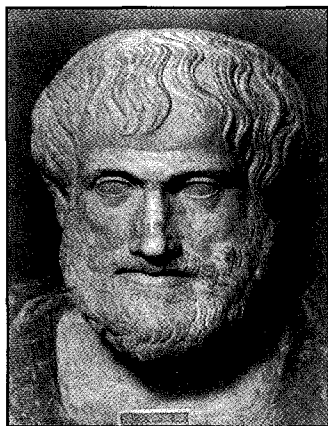
The American lawn culture is also beginning to change with the end of cheap oil and, especially, cheap water. Many homeowners are opting for less grass or more durable and drought-tolerant varieties. Some are returning their yards to native grasses. Steinberg sees all these trends as good ones that will reduce the environmental and health costs of lawns. One alternative he never discusses, though, is the garden. Home vegetable gardens and orchards were the real losers in the lawn revolution. Most zoning laws today promote lawns over gardens or other types of landscaping. In the past, even city dwellers tended small gardens and often raised chickens, rabbits, and pigeons to provide protein for their diets. Today, keeping a pair of laying hens in your backyard is a crime in most towns, while running a leaf blower at 90 decibels for hours on end is not. The reason is simple. One is an expression of the power of government and industry; the other, of household autonomy.

It is the loss of the rich and varied home garden to the monolithic mass-

produced lawn that should concern us most. Local economies died with the rise of American global power, a revolution of which the spread of lawns is a part. The home was transformed into a place of consumption and leisure, rather than of production and work. One way to reverse this trend is to reduce lawn size dramatically and replace lawns entirely with gardens. Wendell Berry once remarked that a quarter-acre of land can provide a family of four with all of its fruits and vegetables, but seldom in America is land put to that use.

A nationwide shift to gardens from lawns would be revolutionary. The recapturing of this economic space would reduce chemical and water use and decrease dependence on foreign oil. It would also entail labor reduction and, hence, slow illegal immigration. The garden and the table are two of the most important Christian symbols. It is time they were reunited and returned to their rightful place in American family life.

Tobias Lanz teaches political studies at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. He tends a summer garden of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and okra in his front yard, where a lawn once grew.



The Greek Conservative Mind

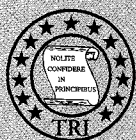
The Greeks invented political philosophy . . .
but not out of thin air

The ancient Greeks liberated themselves from the shackles of religion and tradition to pursue a dream of democracy, equality, and human rights. Right?

Wrong. We do well to remember the Greeks as they really were: their aristocratic pursuit of virtue, their general disdain for democracy, and their strong attachments to family and religion.

"The Greek Conservative Mind" is taught by Dr. Thomas Fleming, who is regarded as a leading authority on Greek lyric verse. Originally presented in the fall of 2004 as a lecture series at the Institute, the course now comprises 16 recorded lectures (on CD or audiotape) and a study guide with suggested readings, key terms, and discussion questions.

For more information, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811 or e-mail jkooistra@rockfordinstitute.org.



THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE

928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

Price: \$175.00

(Please indicate your choice of tapes or CDs)

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

FIGHTING THE CULTURE WAR FOR 30 YEARS

* Defending Christendom *

TWIN THRONES: THE EMPEROR AND THE POPE—Audiotape—Sometimes in conflict, other times in harmony, the powers that ruled medieval Europe—the emperor of the Eastern Empire in Constantinople and the pope in Rome, and, later, the Germanic kings—struggled to realize the merits of separate but shared authority, though neither side spoke of “separation of Church and state.” A lecture by Dr. Thomas Fleming.

Tape #: RIS1 \$12.50

SAINT THOMAS ON THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY—Audiotape—“Jesus loves me; this I know”: trite children’s ditty or profound theological insight? Fr. Hugh Barbour explains the assertion that theology is a science that engenders certitudes. He also shows that the schemata of grammar and rhetoric underlie everything in medieval Catholic thought, and he highlights the literary nature of Sacred Scripture.

Tape #: RIS2 \$12.50

DANTE AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE OTHER WORLD—Audiotape—Could we become too sophisticated to appreciate and profit from the most complete and best-articulated medieval imagination of the universe? Dr. John Nieto explains why understanding the medieval cosmology and geography of this world is so important when reading a poem that offers us a vision of the other world.

Tape #: RIS3 \$12.50

EXILE AND HOPE IN ANGLO-SAXON VERSE—Audiotape—The “Dark Ages” is a misnomer, a widely spread misunderstanding that C.S. Lewis attributed to “chronological snobbery.” In this verbal tour of Norse sagas and Anglo-Saxon poetry, literary biographer Joseph Pearce presents his case that the Anglo-Saxons were a beacon of Christian civilization among barbarian Vikings.

Tape #: RIS4 \$12.50

JOHN WYCLIFF: HERETIC OR PROTESTANT?—Audiotape—Aaron D. Wolf examines the life and theology of the man dubbed the “Morning Star of the Reformation.” Wycliff’s political intrigues cast suspicion on his motives for reform, and his rigid moralism and fiery anathemas call into question his alleged influence on Protestants, who clung to the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone.

Tape #: RIS5 \$12.50

CHIVALRY AND VIRTUE IN SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT—Audiotape—Key to understanding a work such as *Beowulf* or *Sir Gawain* is asking the question, “What exactly is the allegory?” Joseph Pearce answers this question, and he explains the viewpoints of Anglo-Saxon scholar J.R.R. Tolkien and discusses where he and Tolkien agree and differ about the allegorical dimensions of these works.

Tape #: RIS6 \$12.50

THE INSPIRED GENERALSHIP OF THE LORRAINE PEASANT GIRL—Audiotape—After a review of the causes of the Hundred Years War and a discussion of military trends, Christopher Check tells the inspiring story of Joan of Arc—military commander, patriot, liberator of France, and saint—and corrects a string of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of her remarkable life.

Tape #: RIS7 \$12.50

FROM THE COMMUNE TO THE STATE—Audiotape—The latter part of the Middle Ages saw the transition from a political life rooted in blood, family, and soil (manifested in feudalism) and in clans, neighborhoods, and guilds (the commune), to more abstract notions of government (the modern state). Dr. Thomas Fleming traces this transition in medieval Tuscany and explains its enduring social and moral effects.

Tape #: RIS8 \$12.50

DANTE’S LA VITA NUOVA—Audiotape—Dr. John Nieto compares Dante’s *Commedia* with his earlier *La Vita Nuova*, considering, among other things, the character of Beatrice, the idea of poetry’s ability to improve the poet’s soul, the mode of narration, the significance of the number nine, the historical poet-author *versus* the narrator-pilgrim-lover, and the office of every poet.

Tape #: RIS10 \$12.50

DANTE THE TUSCAN—Audiotape—One of the obstacles to understanding Dante’s work is not knowing the people to whom he alludes. Modern commentaries are of little help, merely describing so-and-so as a very prominent judge in Pisa. In this lecture, Dr. Thomas Fleming fleshes out the allusions, giving a verbal tour of the real-life events and personalities of Dante’s Tuscany.

Tape #: RIS11 \$12.50

DUNS SCOTUS AND THE INCARNATION—Audiotape—Scott P. Richert discusses and defends the controversial contributions of Blessed John Duns Scotus, the “Subtle Doctor,” particularly to the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (considered heretical by the Dominicans at the time) and the debates over the reason for Christ’s Incarnation.

Tape #: RIS12 \$12.50

AQUINAS AND THE PRIORITY OF THE GOOD—Audiotape—Fr. Hugh Barbour, using Scripture and the writings of Saint Thomas, examines the relationship of Good to Being. He explains that Christians do not practice philosophy in the strictest sense of the word. All the resources of human nature and experience, he argues, are sublimated to the service of theology.

Tape #: RIS13 \$12.50

THE POLITICS OF SAINT THOMAS: EXEGESIS OF PSALM 145(146):3—Audiotape—Did Saint Thomas believe that there is an ideal form of government? Fr. Hugh Barbour examines Thomas Aquinas’s analysis of political institutions and the development of his political thought in this exegesis of the scriptural passage from which The Rockford Institute takes its motto.

Tape #: RIS14 \$12.50

DANTE’S MORAL HIERARCHY—Audiotape—An understanding of faith is at the heart of the *Commedia*’s construction. Dr. John Nieto presents three ways in which we can read the *Commedia* with spiritual and moral profit: observing the souls met along the journey; observing the Pilgrim and his interaction with those he meets; and observing ourselves while reading.

Tape #: RIS15 \$12.50

THE MEDIEVAL IMAGINATION OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN—Audiotape—J.R.R. Tolkien was one of the most popular writers of the 20th century, yet modern critics refuse to regard him as influential because of, among other reasons, his use of myth to reveal truth. Joseph Pearce explains Tolkien’s philosophy of myth and examines his use of allegory in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tape #: RIS16 \$12.50

PETRARCH: FIRST RENAISSANCE OR LAST MEDIEVAL MAN?—Audiotape—The answer to this question depends on what we mean by “Renaissance” and what we mean by “medieval.” Was Petrarch both, or was he neither? Dr. Thomas Fleming paints us a portrait of one of the greatest writers in the history of Christendom and one of the greatest cultural influences of the past six centuries.

Tape #: RIS17 \$12.50

TWO KINGDOMS: CHRIST AND CAESAR—Audiotape or CD—The Roman Empire and the Christian Church grew up almost simultaneously. The Empire was the “kingdom of this world” *par excellence*, while the Church represented the Kingdom of Heaven in the world. Dr. Thomas Fleming explains how the two institutions, though often at odds, were gradually intertwined until they came to resemble each other.

Tape (R06WS1) or CD (R06WS1CD) \$12.50

REPUBLICAN RELIGION—Audiotape or CD—The success of the Roman Republic was very largely dependent on religion. From dawn to dusk and from cradle to grave, republican Romans were involved with thousands of special deities, each with its own rites, while the Republic as a whole was unified in the worship of the great gods and by the Vestal Virgins who tended the sacred hearth.

Tape (R06WS2) or CD (R06WS2CD) \$12.50

PAGAN CRITICS, STOIC MARTYRS—Audiotape or CD—Of the several salvation philosophies that became popular in the Empire, Stoicism, the theology of the ruling class, was the most important. Appealing to the Roman sense of duty, philosophers such as Seneca also called for a charity to others that seemed almost Christian. Dr. Thomas Fleming explains why emperors who persecuted the Church also hated the Stoics.

Tape (R06WS3) or CD (R06WS3CD) \$12.50

IMPERIAL CULTS—Audiotape or CD—In the late Republic, explains Gail Fleming, Roman religion was increasingly co-opted by the state to the point that many people lost interest in the old gods. At the same time, Rome was influenced by foreign religions coming from Syria (Cybele), Persia (Mithras), and Egypt (Isis) that ran the gamut from the kind and comforting Isis to the bizarre and disgusting rites of the Syrian Mother.

Tape (R06WS4) or CD (R06WS4CD) \$12.50

BUILDING THE CHURCH OF THE GENTILES—Audiotape or CD—Dr. Thomas Fleming discusses one of the most pressing questions in the early Church: Her relationship to Judaism. As Saint Paul began to convert large numbers of Gentiles, it became necessary to define Christianity in non-Jewish terms. Many of the Church’s theological disputes can be seen as a conflict between Jewish and Gentile visions of Christianity.

Tape (R06WS5) or CD (R06WS5CD) \$12.50

IRENÆUS AND THE PERENNIAL HERESIES—Audiotape or CD—Dr. James Patrick describes the dispute between the Platonists and Saint Irenæus. Noting that, “from the first, Christianity was a religion not of comfort but reality,” he explains that Christianity leads to the Resurrection, which is “the perfected life of the human person,” while Gnosticism leads to “envy, complaint, secular utopianism, and nihilism.”

Tape (R06WS6) or CD (R06WS6CD) \$12.50

Church Shopper

Like the French, we Americans live in, to borrow from Claude Polin, a “me-first” society. Each and every man is the measure of all things, his own arbiter of that which is beautiful, true, and of good report. Reared on the Disney principle (*You can be whatever you want to be, or, Be true to yourself, or Listen to your heart*—all variations on a me-first theme), we approach “culture” like a hungry shopper. And the customer is always right.

So it goes with religion. Only in America could the term *church shopping* be coined. *What church do you go to? Oh, we’re church shopping right now.* True, the amoeba-like sectarianism of American Protestantism makes the ground more fertile (*If you don’t like your church, start a new one!*), but this phenomenon is hardly confined to Protestantism. Idealists of all backgrounds shop till they find the perfect church—the right blend of preaching (self-help, hellfire), worship (your musical taste), and multigenerational ministry (childcare, youth ministry, Golden Agers’ Prayer Breakfast).

And we advertise: *Looking for an unashamedly fundamental, King James, mission-minded church? Visit us this Sunday at . . . Or: Tired of worship that doesn’t speak to your heart? You’ll love our contemporary service! Or: Tired of video monitors and praise bands? You’ll love our traditional service!*

Weary church shoppers more familiar with today’s market hunt for the best value for their dollar. If you find a service with (insert your genre preference) music, you may be willing to settle for a church with less-than-stellar Kiddie Kare or Children’s Church. Or, if a “vibrant youth ministry” for your awakening Britney or Fiona or Avril is what you have in mind, you might settle for an average praise band. The market is always changing, however, as are customer needs, and any church that sits on its hands in the “culture” department (or doesn’t realize that “lost people matter to God,” as church-growth guru Bill Hybels puts it) may lose valuable members to another ministry.

When, as a teenager, I interviewed at a very cool “men’s” clothing chain at the mall, the manager, gauging my aptitude

for selling skinny ties and rayon suits, asked me, “When you walk by a store, what’s the first thing you see?” I stammered out the answer, “What’s . . . in the front?” “Yes!” he replied, as if I had just hit on the Greatest Marketing Principle Ever. “We put the latest, hottest things right in the front [genius]—at the lowest possible price—but then, you know what? We upsell! You must have the socks that go with that! Do you have a bolo tie? Our jeans are two-for-twenty-five this week, by the way!”

Get them in the door—that’s the marketing strategy aimed at today’s church shopper. Then, you upsell him with a deeper commitment: life, salvation, forgiveness—something more expensive. If you try hard enough, you can steal that shopper from his regular store, and you’ve got yourself a repeat customer.

Today, denominations are often viewed as brand names, known by what is displayed in the front window. *Catholic* (increasingly associated with pedophile priests, thanks to the media) means “stand up, sit down, go up front, take communion” and is often associated with the “monotony” of reading “rote” prayers (not from the heart). *Baptist* invites Yankees to speak in a “Southern accent” and make fun of “Pastor Billy Bob” who thinks you’ll go to “hey-yull” if you drink a beer. And *Lutherans* are largely known by Garrison Keillor’s Woebegonians—frumpy, melancholy, unfriendly, and acutely interested in gossip and two-cheese (both American) potato casserole.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is trying to change that image, though, through a fantastic marketing/missions campaign. President Gerald (“Jerry”) R. Kieschnick’s Ablaze!™ (speaking of “hey-yull”) program, launched in 2004, is an effort to stem the tide of declining membership in the conservative church body by “changing its culture.”

Ablaze!™—the vision of igniting a worldwide Lutheran mission movement to share the Gospel with 100 million people, including 50 million in the United States. It is a movement because it could change the culture of our church. How? By fully engaging every member



in reaching the unchurched or uncommitted through the Seven Mission Responses: Go, Pray, Learn, Give, Tell, Send, and Celebrate. God wants all people to be saved and He has called His children to participate in the task!

To reach those 50 million Americans, the LCMS has provided her Ablaze!™ congregations with “Friendship Ablaze! Tools for Connecting Friends With Jesus,” which amounts to an entire marketing campaign, complete with advertising materials, lite-rock music, and video for four weeks’ worth of services. The first three weeks are designed to prepare the faithful to get their friends in the door on the fourth “Friendship Sunday.” And there are sermon resources (the full text, a mere outline, a PowerPoint presentation—you decide), including the Friendship Sunday sermon, “You Can Pick Your Friends . . .” When I saw that title, I just had to look, and, yes, it is a reference to the middle-school proverb, “You can pick your friends, and you can pick your nose, but you can’t pick your friend’s nose.” Under “Assimilation Resources,” we learn how to “prevent back-door losses” and to “keep the front door open”—which includes “establishing a minimum of seven new friends within the first six months.”

As of this writing, the Ablaze!™ count is up to 1,652,885 “people [worldwide] with whom the Gospel has been shared and reported.” (There’s a ticker online.) Only time will tell if the “assimilation process” has been successful, though, as church shoppers can be unpredictable. By treating souls as customers, we might just be reinforcing the me-first mentality to which they are accustomed, and they might be tempted to look elsewhere for a better product—unless we keep “changing the culture.”



By Any Means Necessary

Was there a point at which American liberals consciously adopted Jacobinism, or did it just creep up on them gradually? This question was brought into rather sharp focus earlier this year when the PBS series *American Experience* presented an expensive two-part documentary entitled "Reconstruction: The Second Civil War." The series recounted the story of Reconstruction, but with such a ferociously partisan emphasis that a Radical Republican of the 1860's might have blushed. Normally, we need not worry too much that even learned people sometimes get their history dead wrong—don't get me started on the demonization of the Middle Ages—but, in this show more than most, the implications for present-day policy were starkly, frighteningly obvious. The good people at PBS, together with a substantial section of liberal academe, evidently believe in their hearts that they are absolutely, infallibly right about the directions that American society should take, and they would like to see their preferences enforced with bayonets, if necessary.

The documentary repays careful watching, but the main themes that emerge can be easily summarized. The story as told is utterly free of complications or ambiguities. After the Civil War, we are told, the legal, civil, and social equality of former slaves had to be recognized and enforced, totally and immediately, without considering any possible obstacles that might arise in the form of legalities, republican or constitutional values, or the interests of the local community against those of the centralized liberal nation.

Governments elected in the Southern states were legitimate if they recognized black voting rights, even when those elections disfranchised substantial sections of the anti-Reconstruction white population (though the program ignored white disfranchisement). No matter how small the minority that a new government represented—45 percent, 15 percent—the regime was democratic if it reflected the correct social goals. These were the views presented by several leading historians of the era, including the aptly named David Blight, who condemns "the great myth of Reconstruction" that the radical regimes were in any way oppressive, however many white

Southerners were excluded from the process. Extremism in the defense of The Idea overrules all lesser objections. The program devoted vast attention to the story of some freed slaves who established an armed separatist republic on a small island, from which all whites were excluded. This cult-like exorcism was presented as an heroic model of black self-determination that should have been more widely imitated.

These social goals had to be preserved by whatever armed military force might be necessary to repress the intransigent evil-doers who opposed the juggernaut of historical progress. The program offered a somewhat ambiguous coverage of federal military rule in the South, at once asserting its necessity (How else are you going to govern those awful people?) and minimizing its reality (There wasn't really a military dictatorship, and, anyway, it was just a little one). David Blight again: "It really wasn't a genuine military occupation after 1868, in any sense of the term we've come to understand military occupations in the 20th century." Well, that's all right then. If the documentary presented the many Americans dubious about Reconstruction as anything other than servants of Satan, it was surely an oversight, which will be corrected in future editions of the program.

Were we to sit down amicably with the producers of *American Experience*, or the academic experts they consulted, I am confident we would not encounter a gaggle of hard-faced Stalinists. Where, then, did they find such ghastly ideas? I suspect it's a generational thing, highly characteristic of baby boomers. Growing up during the civil rights movement of the 1960's, they imbibed harsh lessons about the duty of liberal governments to enforce racial justice no matter what the opposition, or what holes were torn in the Constitution. Projecting these values back a century, liberals see post-Civil War Southerners as the George Wallaces and Lester Maddoxes of their day and suppose that those leaders, too, would have backed down in the face of a more determined federal assault. The failure to push the first Reconstruction thus led directly to a century of segregation, lynching, and repression.

This historical analogy is thoroughly flawed, most obviously because most



Northerners themselves in the 1860's were little less committed to white supremacy than their Southern compatriots were, and few Northern states practiced anything like the equal political rights enforced by Reconstruction regimes. Inevitably, Reconstruction policies were widely seen as heavy-handed retribution against the former Confederacy rather than any form of social justice. Also, not even the most forceful federal interventions of the 1860's involved the mass disfranchisement or political exclusion of the white South. Southern whites in 1860 were not asked to renounce their own stake in the political process but to allow blacks a share in the game.

Such caveats are lost on a generation that grew up with certain basic assumptions about the nature of justice, about the irrelevance of political processes or legal constraints that failed to advance this cause, and about the utter, sordid evil of the racist hypocrites who dared oppose the quest for progress. And that brings me to the appropriate label for the views expressed, which has to be "Jacobin." Shortly after PBS aired the Reconstruction series, the *London Review of Books* published Hilary Mantel's discussion of a new biography of Robespierre. Do these ideas sound at all familiar in the American context?

He never extended to his opponents the courtesy of believing them merely mistaken, or misinformed, or even stupid. In an emergency, such a courtesy is meaningless. . . . Robespierre deplored needless violence, but could persuade himself rather readily to see the need. Due process was too slow for his fast-moving instincts.

The book is entitled *Fatal Purity*, a term that can be usefully applied to Robespierre's modern American disciples. <C>

Not Fade Away

At first glance, the area around Anthony Rudis's 614-acre farm outside Monee, Illinois, seems closer to my hometown in Michigan than it does to *Chronicles'* hometown of Rockford, Illinois. (As the crow flies, the distance between Monee and Spring Lake is almost the same as the distance between Monee and Rockford.) Having traveled the 290/294 loop through the overbuilt Chicago suburbs to arrive here only makes the contrast between these two Illinois locations all the greater. Twenty miles south of Chicago proper, this section of rural Will County seems like the land that time forgot.

The gently rolling landscape alternates between woods and farmland, and wildlife—especially deer, geese, even a hawk—is surprisingly abundant on this cold, gray, early February day. A small stream runs under the bridge where the road narrows to one lane from (barely) two. The road that we're on is paved, but it shows signs of benign neglect. Other roads in the area are still dirt and gravel.

What strikes me immediately about the landscape, though, and brings to mind the thoughts of my hometown in Michigan, is not simply its rural quality—after all, outside of Rockford, Winnebago County is still largely rural—but its *humane* nature. Houses dot the landscape, spread far apart by city standards but relatively close together for a section of the Midwest that remains not simply rural but agricultural. There are fence-rows here, and treelines, and buffer zones of unplowed land along the banks of the creek—features of the agricultural landscape that have all but vanished since the days when Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz urged farmers to plow “fencerow to fencerow.” Just as importantly, as the space between houses indicates, the individual parcels of land are rather small, not the several-square-mile corn-and-soybean agribusiness tracts found in most agricultural areas of the Midwest today. At just under one square mile, Rudis Farm is one of the larger parcels.

Chris Check and I have made the long trek down to Monee because the fate of Rockford and that of this area—quite specifically, that of Rudis Farm—appear, at least for the foreseeable future, to be in-

extricably linked.

The Northwest Chicagoland International Airport at Rockford—previously known as (among other names) the Chicago/Rockford International Airport, the Greater Rockford Airport, and, in a simpler day and age, just the Rockford Airport—has been struggling for years to establish a viable passenger service. (The increasingly expansive name changes are simply a symptom of the problem—referring to anything in Rockford as part of “Chicagoland” is always a sign of desperation, though usually it's found, not among businesses or government agencies, but among those residents of Rockford who have no desire to live in our city on its own terms but want to pretend, absurdly, to be upscale Chicagoans—or, better yet, Chicago suburbanites, which is like aspiring to be a soccer mom without the van, or the children.) Despite the continued plans for expansion of the Southeast Rockfordland International Airport at Chicago (commonly known as “O'Hare”), which sits along I-90 in Chicago's northwest suburbs on the way to Rockford, it is clear that, at some point, O'Hare will physically become all that it can be, while the travel “needs” of those in Greater Northwest Chicago/Rockfordland, on the other hand, can (and, barring a catastrophe that sends the price of fossil fuel through the roof, probably will) continue to grow indefinitely. Who will pick up the slack?

The members of the Greater Rockford Airport Authority (the organization is a few name changes behind the airport) would like the answer to be Rockford, and, for a change, most Rockfordians (myself included) agree with the sentiments of a local governing body. While the Rockford airport survives on its strength as a commercial destination (the airport is a United Parcel Service hub), travelers for business and pleasure cannot rely on it to meet their needs. Currently, United and two minor airlines offer a limited selection of flights—United flies to Denver; Allegiant Air, to Las Vegas and Orlando; and Apple Vacations, to Cancun. (A Chicago-based company, Festival Airlines, plans to offer flights to seasonal tourist destinations, and Hooters Air, which briefly spread its wings here,



has interrupted its service.)

Many people from the Rockford area who fly out of O'Hare (and, to a lesser extent, Milwaukee) would welcome regular passenger service to a good selection of major hubs. The lack of such service means that travel alone drains millions of dollars out of our local economy every year. The airport is physically capable of handling national and international flights, but the primary problem has been the relatively close proximity of O'Hare, which makes the business model for a national airline a bit sketchy. As O'Hare bumps up against the limits of its capacity, however, that business model will change.

What, though, does any of this have to do with 614 acres outside of Monee?

For over a decade now, politicians on both sides of the aisle, joined only by their desire for political influence, their love of campaign contributions, and—persistent rumors have it—their investments in that instrument well beloved of Illinois politicians, the blind trust, have proposed the construction of an airport east of Monee (known as the South Suburban Airport at Peotone, or simply the Peotone Airport, after the nearest town of any size) as the solution to the limits of O'Hare expansion. The current leader of the charge is Jesse Jackson, Jr., Democrat from the Second Congressional District of Illinois—which, oddly, does not encompass the proposed airport (though it does sit on Chicago's South Side).

Opposition to the Peotone Airport is high in Rockford, because most people recognize that this is essentially a zero-sum game—any development at Peotone will mean, at the very least, the postponing of the Rockford Airport's aspirations. Opposition to the airport in eastern Will County, however, runs even higher. Over the past decade, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has acquired,

in a piecemeal fashion, about 2,000 acres for the airport, whose initial footprint would cover 4,200 acres. Many of the remaining landowners, however, have no intention of selling, and so the proponents of the project have repeatedly raised the specter of eminent domain. And, in the post-*Kelo* era, when the justification for eminent domain has shifted from public use to public benefit (particularly economic), a commercial airport trumps farmland any day—especially farmland that, as Mr. Rudis points out, has been heavily depleted, despite better agricultural practices than those on agribusiness “farms.”

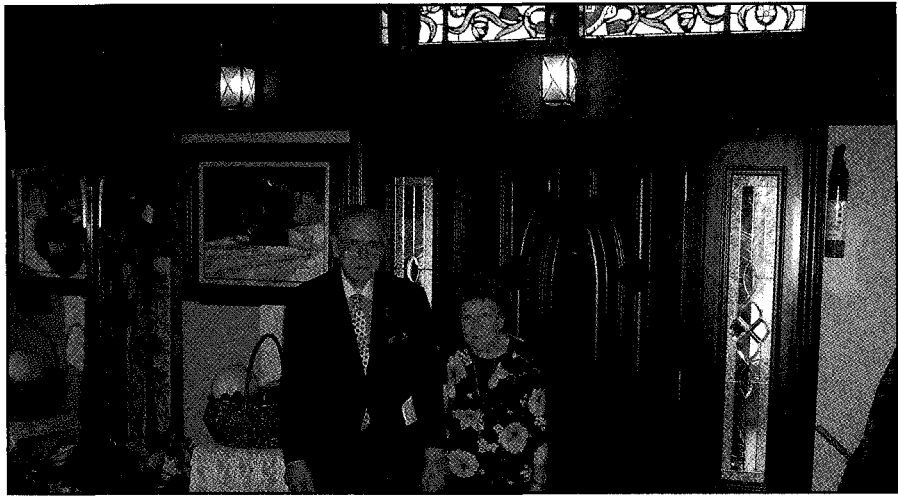
And right in the middle of the controversy sits Rudis Farm.

Mr. Rudis pulls off the road and up to the gate at the entrance of Rudis Farm. Surprisingly spry for a man of 95, he jumps out of the car, opens the gate, returns, and drives us in. I’m not quite sure what I was expecting, but I know it was not what I’ve just found. Off to our left and right, up to the treeline in each direction, stretches a meticulously landscaped lawn, dotted with sculptures. The extended driveway curves to the left, around the edge of the beautiful pond on which geese seem to be walking on water. (In reality, they are standing on sheer ice that is barely visible to the naked eye.)

While 104 acres of his land is still actively farmed, Mr. Rudis has turned most of the rest into a nature preserve, actively reforesting 440 acres and restoring 80 acres of native prairie over almost 40 years. It is the third-largest reforestation project in the state, and the results (even beyond the obvious trees) are noticeable. While Mr. Rudis had pointed out the mounds that run along the treelines on other properties we had passed (a sure sign of topsoil depletion on the fields between the trees), the reforestation of Rudis Farm has clearly begun to replenish the soil.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has recognized the value of Mr. Rudis’s work, and, for 20 years now, his land has been enrolled in a federal conservation program that provides him with subsidies to aid in his efforts at reforestation. But in a remarkable example of government working at cross-purposes with itself, the Illinois Department of Transportation has targeted Mr. Rudis’s land for the Peotone Airport. In the maps of both the initial boundaries of the airport and the final ones (spanning 24,000 acres), Rudis Farm sits almost dead center.

Roc Van Guilder, a spokesman for



Scott P. Richert

Anthony and Mary Rudis inside the front door of their home of over 30 years, a converted hay barn outside Monee, Illinois.

the consulting firm that IDOT has employed to acquire land for the airport, was interviewed by the *Chicago Tribune* in late 2003:

Van Guilder said there are no plans to save any of Rudis’ vast woods or native prairie grasses should the airport be built.

“Construction of a terminal facility will be on the bulk of his property,” Van Guilder said.

In fact, just as Rudis Farm sits in the center of the proposed airport, the terminal would be built on the ruins of the heart of Rudis Farm—the converted hay barn in which Mr. Rudis and his wife live. As the driveway curves back, we see the front of the house, decorated with elaborate woodwork both outside and, we discover as we enter the main door, in.

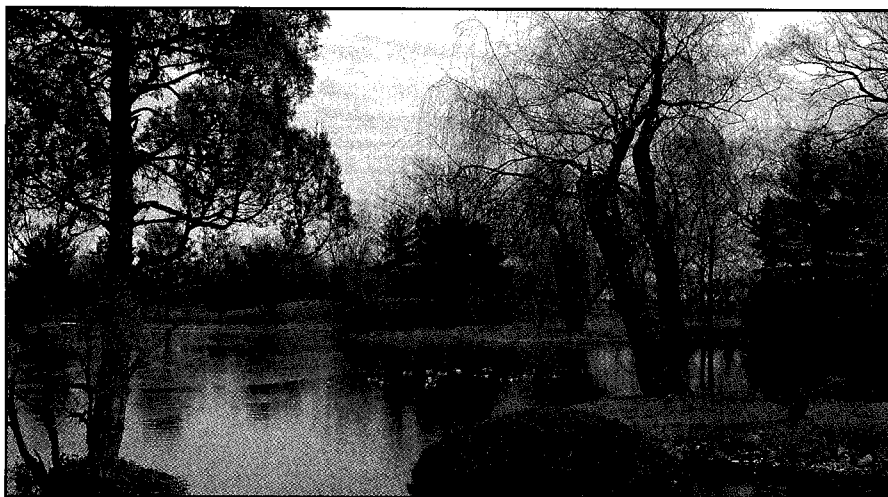
Chris and I wander around the living room, open to the rafters of the old barn, while Mr. Rudis goes into the living quarters in the addition on the back to find his wife. The former haylofts have been converted, on one side to a library, on the other to a bedroom and office. Stained-glass windows and a baptismal font were rescued by the Rudises, faithful Catholics, from Chicago’s Holy Name Cathedral when it was “wreckovated” in the wake of Vatican II. A series of impressive bronzes surround the fireplace on the back wall. And everywhere is dark wooden scrollwork and carvings, following traditional Lithuanian patterns.

Mary Rudis, a survivor at 90 years old of cancer and intensive chemotherapy, is rightfully proud of this homage to the Lithuanian heritage that she and her hus-

band share. Married 65 years, they have lived almost half of their married life in this house, which continues to serve as a haven for their children and grandchildren from the hassles of the modern world. Now, if Jesse Jackson, Jr., and IDOT have their way, this will all disappear—the house, the woodlands, the prairie, the wildlife, and, more important than all of that, any trace of the family that has worked so hard to restore this land and to create a legacy for themselves and others to enjoy.

And for what? “Just to satisfy the quirks of a few politicians,” Mr. Rudis tells us, but it is likely more than that. Congressman Jackson has famously claimed that he can guarantee private investment to get the airport off the ground, but, as Mr. Rudis points out, “How many of these politicians are economists who can say with certainty that an airport here will pay for itself?”

Is Congressman Jackson’s statement a spectacular gamble, or does he have inside knowledge? If the latter, does he stand to benefit financially, and not just politically, from the construction of the Peotone Airport? Why is he pushing this project so strongly, when the Gary/Chicago International Airport, which is *closer* to his congressional district (and, therefore, more likely to benefit his constituents), is not only ripe for expansion but received federal funds late this winter to start the process? The media that have covered the controversy—even those that, editorially, have been skeptical of the need for the airport—have been strangely reluctant to ask these questions. Is Jackson beyond reproach because of his pedigree, or is it simply not wise to examine the pos-



The pond on Rudis Farm, dug by the Rudises, attracts wildlife, such as these Canada geese, year-round.

sible personal purposes of any politician in the Land of Lincoln?

The answers, unfortunately, will have to wait for another day, but time may be running out. Plat maps of the area show that IDOT is slowly surrounding Rudis Farm, and how often does a government agency spend this much money and effort over so many years only to abandon a foolish project?

Still, there is some cause for hope.

While IDOT sent letters in late 2004 to 57 landowners and lessees whose property falls within the initial footprint of the proposed airport, threatening each of them with eminent-domain proceedings if they didn't cooperate—in other words, if they didn't offer to sell their property to IDOT at the price IDOT wishes to offer—the agency has not made good on its threat. One thing is clear: The airport cannot be built unless the state acquires Rudis Farm,

and Anthony Rudis isn't selling. And so, for now, IDOT is proceeding slowly:

Hanson Professional Services Inc. is the consulting firm hired by IDOT to lead property acquisition efforts, and officials there said they are leaving Rudis alone now because of his age.

"We won't bother him until we absolutely need the property," said Roc Van Guilder . . .

If they're waiting for nature to take its course, they may have a very long wait. These Lithuanians are a tough lot—they outlived Soviet communism, after all—and Anthony Rudis is the kind of man who might stay alive just for the fight.

As Chris and I pull away from the gates of Rudis Farm and head west into the late afternoon sun, a final thought occurs to me, one that would be as incomprehensible to an Illinois bureaucrat as it would have been to a Soviet *apparatchik*. When Anthony and Mary Rudis have departed this vale of tears, they will continue to live on in the minds and hearts of their children and grandchildren. And I smile, knowing with the certainty of faith that their family will continue to fight the good fight. 

Black Sea Sketches

BLACK SEA SKETCHES is a travel book written for serious travelers, including armchair travelers. Although the author may take an occasional swim or walk the beaches, the book is much more about the history and prehistory, the culture and the contemporary scene than about recreational opportunities. It is the kind of book you would want to read before or during your own travel in these fascinating countries.

The five countries—Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia—often share military and economic history, but cultural contrasts abound: different alphabets and languages, different religions. While most of Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Georgia embrace the Orthodox faith, Turkey is largely Muslim, as is part of the Crimean population. All five of the countries reflect, especially architecturally, the common past of ancient Greece and, most of them, of the later Genoan commercial empire.

Black Sea Sketches



William Mills

Rising above the glittering monuments of the past, however, are the people Mills met and the stories of their lives, often of great courage under pressure and of generosity to a stranger and a traveler.

Comments about other works of William Mills

"William Mills' stories draw the reader deeply into the hearts and minds of men and women to reveal the essential nature of Man in a world governed by forces so primal there is no resisting their call, no mitigation of their judgment."

—Gordon Weaver

"Seldom have I found a contemporary poet so intensely and humanly convincing. Mills' voice is very near the fraternal and memorable sounds we all want to make, and say."

—James Dickey

Chronicles
A JOURNAL OF AMERICAN CULTURE

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

Paperback Price \$19.95
(\$16.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling)

Back in Print!

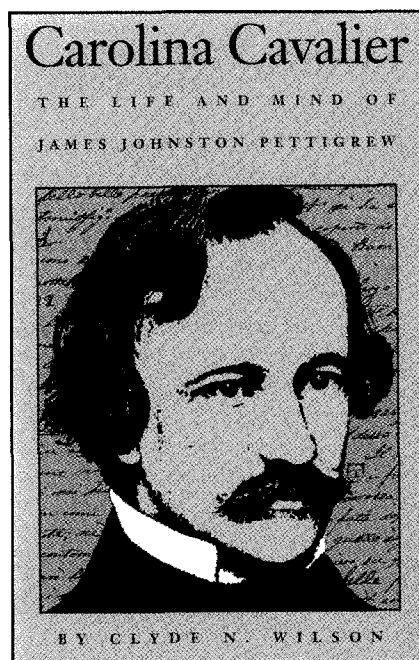
Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew
by Clyde Wilson

Chronicles Press is proud to announce the republication of Dr. Wilson's highly sought-after biography of one of the South's most brilliant and remarkable sons.

"A strong, forthright book."
—W.J. Cooper, Jr.,
Civil War History

"Transcending even first-rate biography, *Carolina Cavalier* returns us to the fine old tradition of history as moral narrative."
—Steven Davis,
The Courier

"Magisterial intellectual history."
—M.E. Bradford,
National Review



"Wilson is, in short, an exemplary historian who, in this book, displays his formidable talent."
—Eugene Genovese,
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture

"In Wilson's sensitive hands *Carolina Cavalier* is biography raised to an art form."
—Michael J. Bonafield,
Charleston News and Courier

"No study of a commanding general of either side better conveys the personal, social, cultural, and religious qualities of its subject; of no Confederate general is there in this regard a superior one-volume study."

—David Bovenizer, *Southern Partisan*

Carolina Cavalier Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Paperback Price \$27.95

CARO

(\$24.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling each) X Quantity _____ = Total _____

Name _____



Check or money order enclosed

Address _____



Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

City/State/Zip _____

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please mail form (with payment) to: Chronicles/Products, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054
or, to order toll-free, call 1-800-397-8160

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

The Fire Next Time (A Message to Culture Warriors)



Houston now has a professional soccer team, which is not something I'm especially excited about. The team's initial moniker, however, apparently got a rise out of the Bayou City's "Latino" residents, many of whom, we are told, "only came here to work." Not only did these supposedly friendly worker bees get upset, but many of their leaders screeched at the top of their lungs about the proposed name of the team, "Houston 1836"—1836 being the year the city named after Texas hero Sam Houston was founded, as well as the year Texas won its independence from Mexico. Those who only came to work have started acting as though they are here to stay. The name of the team, you see, was an insult to *their* identity.

Admittedly, Houston 1836 doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, though there was a nice alternative—the "36ers." But that would never do. Anyway, how many real Americans give a damn about soccer? Who do the team's owners think will come see the games? Maybe those friendly folks who only came here to work would bring their families if only the owners changed the name of the team to something like "the Dynamo." Then

maybe those friendly folks, who really share our values, might not even boo during the national anthem, or throw beer bottles on the field, or urinate in the parking lot, or attack Americans waving their national banner, or do other un-nice things they have been observed doing on other occasions in other cities where they only came to work.

One rather naive blogger wondered what all the fuss was about. Are the British insulted by the NBA's 76ers? What about the 49ers—California was once part of Mexico, too, wasn't it? But the naive blogger, like a lot of Americans these days, has no historical memory—and seems to think nobody else does, either. This, in a state where Cinco de Mayo is now a bigger holiday than March 2 (Texas Independence Day). "Anglos"—that is, white Americans—are now a minority in the Lone Star State, as in sunny California. And those friendly people who share our family values and only came here to work are now the largest racial/ethnic group in Texas. And they have been clamoring to have their story told—no more heroic tales of the Alamo, but only those that recall how mean-spirited "Anglos" raped the continent and did only bad things, especially to La Raza and other People of Color. They are telling us who is now in charge.

They were telling us the same thing when all those Spanish-language signs, posters, and even ballots started appearing, and when Spanish-language TV stations began advertising businesses that are "100% Mexican owned." They have come not only to work but to enrich our culture, not with fine cuisine or bull rings or *piñatas*, but with gang bangers and a disregard for law, order, and public hygiene.

They were reminding us of the way things are during those protest marches in March and April. They didn't like the idea of people who have violated U.S. sovereignty being "criminalized." And they wanted to let President Jorge Bush (whom they despise, by the way—what's not to despise about a nation that won't defend its territory?) know that they would not stand for anything like that in the lands they are now reconquering.

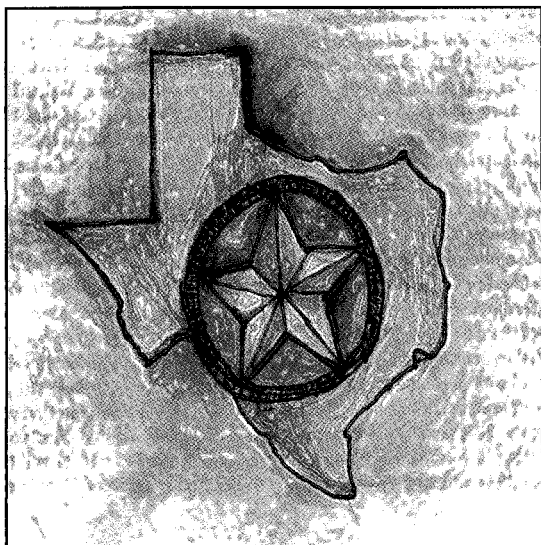
Chronicles readers will please excuse my flippant and, yes, bitter tone. I have grown weary of conservatives—or any reasonable people—prefacing comments on immigration with an overly sentiment-

tal phrase about how some of their best friends are "Hispanic" or how hardworking folks from south of the border are. We all seem to have absorbed the leftist *Zeitgeist*: Shouldn't we *always* be more concerned with foreigners/minorities than with our own people? Isn't it "selfish" to put America and Americans first? Oh, by the way, I am not a "racist."

I am well aware that our friends from La Raza, the MS-13 mob, and even Al Qaeda have been aided and abetted by our own traitorous elite, who are more despicable than the gang bangers, *reconquistas*, and terrorists. Sam Francis explained to us that the managerial elite had decided to destroy national identity as part of its utopian, blasphemous dream of globalization. And La Raza, militant Muslims, and other masses of aliens are the foot soldiers used in a great battle that is simultaneously antiwhite, anti-American, and anti-Christian. Islam may be a fine vehicle for such a plan, uniting the aliens and giving them an ideological/religious vehicle to further their war on what the late Susan Sontag once called a cancer on the face of the earth.

Indeed, with Europe's homegrown population shrinking rapidly and both Europe and America being overrun by aggrieved aliens, it is small wonder that those aliens are moving in for the kill. That is the way of the world. Racial, ethnic, and religious groups always compete for territory, status, and resources. As Thomas Fleming noted at last year's meeting of the John Randolph Club, we are talking about peoples who have not just a different point of view but different histories. Nietzsche called this assertion of self the Will to Power, but any Christian will recognize this as the egotistical state of fallen mankind—and of a quite natural imperative of identifying with one's own extended family. It is one reason we have national boundaries. Preventing violence, racial and religious strife, and preserving order and the well-being of our own people are good reasons for defending those boundaries.

Search the internet for photos from the recent mass-immigration protests, and you will see signs among the Mexican flags on display telling us that we Americans are the real aliens. And you will occasionally see some black militants, and other highly agitated People of Color,



Elizabeth Wolf

among the protestors, bearing signs warning “honkies” of what the future holds in store for them. These scenes call to mind Sam Francis’s term “anarcho-tyranny.” True, the marches have been mostly “peaceful,” if that is how one should describe a mob of aliens demanding their “rights” in a foreign land. But the fire next time may be a conflagration we cannot put out—or even control.

There have been a host of good reasons given for favoring immigration control and border security: protecting the environment; defending America’s poorest citizens against unfair economic competition (Where are those liberals who have posed as the defenders of the downtrodden? Where are black leaders when their people really need them?); protecting our standard of living; and preventing terrorist attacks and the importation of criminal aliens. But the time has come to emphasize national survival. For me, defending the nation means defending my children. If the fate of white farmers in what used to be Rhodesia, or of Russians who used to live in Chechnya, is any indicator of what the future might hold (and I think it is), then that is all the reason we need to defend our borders.

For 30 years, *Chronicles* has fought the good fight in what has come to be called America’s Culture War. Our writers and editors have defended the right to life and decried abortion; asserted the rights of states and local communities against the federal leviathan; denounced pornography and destructive cultural trends; and defended Christianity against the Christophobes. We have called for fiscal prudence, limited government, and a foreign policy based on American national interests, while attacking empire. We have defended property rights, the principle of judicial restraint, and the many small enclaves of distinct subcultures traditional to our great land. But our culture warriors must understand that if (or when) the day comes when whites are a minority in America, when our country is nothing more than a mass of tribes competing for power and privilege, and when the Evil and Stupid Parties finally merge, then none of the causes I mentioned above will matter any longer.

Wayne Allensworth lives in Keller, Texas. Some of his best friends are, in fact, “Hispanic.”

Letter From Berlin

by Curtis Cate

Down to Earth—With a Thud!



The history of Berlin over the past 16 years—more exactly, since the dramatic fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989—offers an almost classic example of how wild dreams conceived in a moment of euphoria can so easily collapse into a mood of grudging resignation.

Overnight, the divided city, which had previously had two town halls—one in East Berlin, the other in the southwest-central district of Schöneberg in West Berlin—was administratively reunited in the redbrick Rotes Rathaus, located east of Unter den Linden, not far from the Nikolaikirche, the city’s oldest church (13th century), in the historic center of Berlin.

Galvanized by Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s visionary promise that, within four years, an industrially backward East Germany would be transformed into a “flourishing landscape,” a municipal coalition government composed of Christian Democrats and Socialists embarked enthusiastically on a policy of massive reconstruction. Famous architects from all over the world were invited to descend like eagles on the still war-ravaged wastes of this new El Dorado in the hope that they could help to make the city—with its 3 opera companies, 5 symphony orchestras, 150 museums, and umpteen theaters (some guidebooks have spoken dithyrambically of no fewer than 500)—what Berlin was supposed to have been in the “crazy” 1920’s: the cultural capital of Europe. What the city, with its three-and-a-half million inhabitants, could not provide in funds would, it was assumed, be generously provided by the government of a Federal Republic now numbering 80 million citizens.

The acme of this euphoric self-intoxication was probably reached in the years 1999-2000, when, in an effort to revive the once-bustling, bus-tram-and-automobile-crammed Potsdamer Platz—the Picadilly Circus of pre-World War II Berlin—DaimlerChrysler “unveiled” a soaring complex of 19 skyscrapers, designed by architects from half a dozen countries. Shortly afterward, in June 2000, Sony opened a rival center of its own, a modernistic glass-and-steel structure with a

425-foot transparent “tent roof” (strung on steel rods and hawsers), calculated to awe visitors to its Film Museum.

So much for the architectural achievements, of which there were many others. The question that had, by this time, raised its ugly head was, *Who is going to pay for all these marvels?* For, in the meantime, none of the city’s soaring expectations had been realized. It had been hoped that Germany’s major banks would make a beeline for a reunified Berlin, but this did not happen, most of them continuing to regard Frankfurt as the Federal Republic’s financial capital. It had confidently been assumed—since its founder, the pioneering electrical engineer and telegraphic inventor Werner von Siemens, had first established his famous firm in 19th-century Berlin—that Germany’s foremost electronics corporation would return to its original home. Instead, Siemens remained stubbornly attached to its main headquarters in Bavaria. Nestlé even chose to close down a local chocolate-making subsidiary, while the city of Berlin lost 250,000 manufacturing jobs.

It had been expected that the gradual transfer of the federal government’s departments from tiny Bonn to huge Berlin would result in a desperate need for office space and a real-estate boom. Exactly the opposite occurred—a 30-percent decline in real-estate values and tens of thousands of square meters of empty office space. A spectacular example, which any stroller can now view on the Kurfürstendamm, is the 16-story skyscraper, designed like a ship’s prow by Chicago architect Helmut Jahn, to “jazz up” the Kranzler Eck (site of the once-famous “Kranzler Corner” café of pre-war Berlin), 11 of whose glass-paned floors remain conspicuously empty.

In the summer of 2001, the Bankgesellschaft Berlin, largely owned by the city, was bankrupted in a scandal caused by bogus deals and corrupt real-estate loans. Klaus Wowereit, a clever Social Democratic politician, took advantage of the resultant chaos to forge a radically new alliance with the PDS—the Party of Democratic Socialism (a post-1989 successor to East Germany’s once all-powerful Communist Party)—riding to a crushing victory over the conservative CDU and CSU in the municipal elections of October 2001. Appalled by this lurch leftward, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder intervened to forge a new makeshift coalition, from which the irate neocommunists were excluded. Klaus Wowereit,



however, survived. As a result, Berlin, like Paris, now has a homosexual mayor—who is only too happy to have the Potsdamer Platz, now the site of an important annual film festival, used for huge international demonstrations of “gay pride.”

Crippled by debts—some estimates put the figure at 46 billion euros—the city government has continued to be plagued by scandals. A controversial Memorial for Murdered Jews, consisting of a bleak undulating surface of 2,700 unmarked slabs, had hardly been inaugurated near Unter den Linden’s administrative center in 2003 when it was revealed that the special varnish used to protect the slabs from being defaced by antisemitic graffiti had been manufactured by a Berlin firm that had once provided the Nazi regime with poison gas for its death camps.

The latest “scandal” concerns a scheme to restore the 17th-century Stadtschloss, built at the eastern end of Unter den Linden by Berlin’s Hohenzollern rulers, which Walter Ulbricht’s communist regime decided to demolish in 1950 in order to create a large proletarian parade-ground honoring the memory of Marx and Engels. For lack of funds, the original plan for a total reconstruction of the castle has been shelved. Instead, a new, basically bogus “palace” is to be built behind a baroque *trompe-l’œil* façade. But even for this task of “national [in fact, Prussian] recognition,” the needed funds have not yet been found.

The leftward lurch in Berlin’s 2001 municipal elections foreshadowed by some four years what was to happen in the federal elections of September 2005. In those elections—which cost Gerhard Schröder’s Social Democrats 29 Bundestag seats; the Christian Democrats, 34; and their (es-

entially Bavarian) Christian Socialist allies, 13—the spectacular victor, with a dramatic advance of 51 parliamentary seats, was a newly founded Linkspartei (“Party of the Left”). It was this hastily concocted coalition—of, on the one hand, disgruntled “Ossies” (East Germans), led by a clever Berlin lawyer, Gregor Gysi, who kept denouncing the scandalously high rate of unemployment in the Federal Republic’s five eastern provinces (21 percent, compared with 11 percent in the West), and, on the other hand, Socialist “defectors” fed up with Chancellor Schröder’s “moderation” and demanding radically anticapitalist “soak the rich” policies, led by a veteran Saarland troublemaker named Oskar Lafontaine—that made it impossible for either of Germany’s two main parties to obtain an absolute majority (more than 300) in a Bundestag of 614 deputies.

The paradoxical result of this stalemate was that the two principal nonvictors—Gerhard Schröder’s repudiated SPD (222 Bundestag seats) and the unsuccessful CDU-CSU alliance (226 seats)—were forced to accept a new “Grand Coalition,” which both parties basically detested. It was small wonder that the ensuing negotiations—just who was to get this or that ministerial portfolio, including the top job of chancellor—lasted two full months before Angela Merkel, the chairman of the CDU, was finally approved on November 22 by a Bundestag majority of 397 deputies as Germany’s first woman chancellor.

That day was also an historic moment for postwar Germany, because, for the first time, the chancellor came from one of her eastern provinces. The daughter of a Protestant clergyman from Hamburg who, in 1947, was asked by his superiors in the Lutheran church to move to the East German *Land* of Brandenburg in a missionary effort to maintain the status of the imperiled Evangelical Church in the adverse, atheistic environment of a communist state, Angela Kasner (her maiden name) Merkel has never been a charismatic orator—unlike her opponent Schröder. Her initial interest in science (physics and quantum chemistry) was typical of a sober, hard-working and pragmatic disposition. But it is precisely these undramatic, plain-speaking virtues that have now made her so popular in a country saturated by opportunistic rhetoric and glib promises.

Even her critics—they included Edmund Stoiber, the once powerful but now crestfallen minister president of Ba-

varia—have had to admit that the 51-year-old Merkel is a skilled and stubborn negotiator. Although forced to grant her Social Democratic “partners” a majority of ministerial posts in the new “Grand Coalition” government, including the key post of foreign minister, she lost no time staking out her claim to be the future architect of German foreign policy by undertaking a whirlwind tour of major European capitals—visiting Paris and Brussels the day after being chosen chancellor, London the next day, and Warsaw the following week. By the time the heads of state met for a summit meeting of E.U. leaders in mid-December, Angela Merkel had transformed herself into the “rising star” among European politicians.

After restoring friendly relations with Washington (badly impaired by Schröder’s anti-American rhetoric during the Federal Republic’s 2002 elections) and displaying a new German firmness—notably at variance with her predecessor’s obsequious friendship with Vladimir Putin—during a visit to Moscow in mid-January, Merkel was able to establish herself in German public-opinion polls as the most popular chancellor the Federal Republic has known since the 1989-90 heyday of Helmut Kohl.

Whether this popularity will endure, along with the laboriously concocted “Grand Coalition,” remains to be seen. One thing is certain: with the 51-year-old Merkel, and the 51-year-old Matthias Platzeck, the new leader of the Social Democrats, who also comes from East German Brandenburg, a new generation is coming to power that is markedly different from that of the 76-year-old Helmut Kohl, a Catholic Rhinelander, and of the 62-year-old Gerhard Schröder, from Westphalia.

What has not changed are the Federal Republic’s most intractable and urgent problems: a steadily increasing national debt; a perilously declining birthrate (1.37 per woman); a dependence on Russian gas; and, above all, a level of unemployment presently exceeding 11 percent in all 16, and about 21 percent in the five eastern, *Länder* (including Berlin) that must be reduced if a new generation of immigrant malcontents, mostly of Turkish or Kurdish origin, are to be dissuaded from embracing Islam as a desperate solution to their persistent economic woes.

Biographer and historian Curtis Cate is the author of The Ides of August, devoted to the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961.

At Last!

A book that exposes the true cultural significance of the Clinton presidency

The Nonpatriotic President: A Survey of the Clinton Years by Janet Scott Barlow

Whitewater . . . Filegate . . . Monica Lewinsky
The scandals are only the beginning

If you think that Bill Clinton's influence will end when he leaves office, you need to read this book. With her inimitable wit and devastating logic, Janet Scott Barlow assesses the real—and lasting—damage wrought by the Clinton presidency.

◆
“The letter carriers think they have toted some sacks of angry, pro-Clinton mail! Just wait. It is going to be very easy to get mad at Mrs. Barlow. The lady swings a mean rolling pin. (Would Hillary regard that metaphor as sexist? Good, let's keep it.)”

—From the Introduction by William Murchison of the
Dallas Morning News

◆
The Nonpatriotic President features 20 hard-hitting chapters, including: “My Nixon,” “Communication as Manipulation,” “Hillaryland,” “It's About Sex,” “Don't Ask, Don't Tell,” and “The Politics of Arrogance.”

THE NONPATRIOTIC PRESIDENT



A Survey of the Clinton Years

JANET SCOTT BARLOW

The Nonpatriotic President Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Paperback Price \$15.95 X Quantity _____ = Total _____
(\$12.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling each)

NONP

Name _____

☐

Check or money order enclosed

Address _____

☐

Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

City/State/Zip _____

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please mail form (with payment) to: Chronicles/Products, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054
or, to order toll-free, call 1-800-397-8160

AJSB07

One Hell for All

In Sartre's grim play *No Exit*, a man and two women are in Hell, which, in this case, is a brightly lit drawing room furnished in the style of *deuxième empire*. At one point, the man, Garcin, famously quips that "hell is other people" (*"l'enfer, c'est les autres"*). One of the women, Inès, eventually responds with the lesser-known but equally disturbing admission that she needs the suffering of others in order to exist.

In the schizophrenic "War on Terror," enfeebled Westerners keep hoping that "other people" will be the ones to bear the brunt of unpleasantness (Serbs today, Greeks tomorrow, Israelis eventually) and that the enemy may be appeased with ever-greater immigration privileges and anti-"Islamophobic" legal codes. The enemy, in the meantime, remains perfectly frank in his admission that the suffering of "others"—infidels, that is—remains not only a tool of policy but a worthy and pleasing goal in and of itself.

A timely reminder of this state of affairs came on April 23, with a new audio tape from Al Qaeda's elusive leader, Osama bin Laden. He spoke on a variety of topics, but his words will be—or at least should be—remembered because, for the first time, he told ordinary Americans and Europeans point blank that they are all legitimate targets of terrorist attacks.

Bin Laden asserted that the exploits of both Europe and the United States in the Islamic world reflect the ongoing "crusade" against Muslims. He condemned both Western governments and individuals for the "crusade" against the people of Palestine:

This war is the joint responsibility of the people and the governments. While the war continues, the people renew their allegiance to their rulers and politicians and continue to send their sons to our countries to fight us.

This statement offers Bin Laden's specific reiteration of Al Qaeda's theological justification for its attacks on ordinary citizens in the Western world. Before

September 11, statements by Al Qaeda leaders and Bin Laden himself clearly indicated their belief that American civilians are legitimate targets, but it was more than six months after the attacks, on April 24, 2002, that Al Qaeda released a statement of 3,700 words outlining its religious justification for killing civilians. Entitled "A Statement From Qaidat al-Jihad Regarding the Mandates of the Heroes and the Legality of the Operations in New York and Washington," it asserted that the United States was waging an offensive war against Islam as a whole, and that Al Qaeda's operations were therefore defensive measures ordained by the Koran to protect the Muslim community from external aggression.

Particularly significant for the non-Muslim world is Al Qaeda's repeated insistence—confirmed in the latest Bin Laden tape—that *there is no prohibition against killing noncombatants, women, and children in Islam*. Al Qaeda has already established a number of conditions in which Muslims are allowed, under Islamic law, to kill noncombatants.

Since America has targeted Muslim civilians, the argument goes, the same response is legal: Whoever attacks you, attack him in like manner (Koran 2:194). If the unbelievers have targeted Muslim women, children, and elderly—as Al Qaeda asserts they have done—it is permissible for Muslims to respond in kind. Furthermore, Muhammad specifically allowed killing civilians. Asked about the infidel women and children who stayed behind with the enemy fighters and were in danger of being killed, he replied, "They are from them." They ceased to be innocents by remaining within the enemy camp.

In addition, Al Qaeda cites Islamic tradition (*Hadith*) to prove that noncombatants may be killed legitimately if they have assisted in combat "in deed, word, opinion, or any other way." This is justified by Muhammad's order to kill Duraid Ibn al-Simma, an old and infirm poet who supposedly provided verbal advice to his enemies. This sweeping concept criminalizes indirect forms of support, which literally makes every gainfully em-



ployed American fair game. Furthermore, Al Qaeda's theologians pointed out, "infidel" women and children may be killed when it is necessary to sap the strength of the enemy by destroying his property. Yet again, the *Hadith* provides the example: The "prophet" did so in his attack on Banu Al-Nadhir. And finally, Muslim scholars point out that Muhammad condoned the use of the contemporary weapons of mass destruction, specifically the giant catapult, against the fortified city of Taif. Civilians were going to be killed or maimed by heavy rocks hurled at the fortifications and beyond them, but "Islam does allow civilian casualties if they occur in the course of an attack that is detrimental to the enemy's military capacity."

Bin Laden's insistence on the "joint responsibility of the people and their governments" merely reiterates the assertion made in Al Qaeda's 2002 statement that, through their participation in the political process that results in anti-Muslim policies, all citizens of the United States, and of other countries supporting her policies, are effectively guilty of aiding and abetting "Crusaders and Zionists" and are, therefore, legitimately targetable:

If the successive Crusader-Zionist governments had not received support from their people, their war against Islam and Muslims would not have taken such an obvious and conspicuous form. It is something that would not attain legitimacy except by the voices of the people.

The presence of a large Muslim diaspora in the Western world is immaterial in the terrorist calculus. In Islamic jurisprudence, any Muslim victims of indiscriminate attacks on "infidel" targets are to be

viewed strictly as collateral damage:

It is no objection to shooting arrows or other missiles against the infidels that there may chance to be among them a Muslim . . . because [such an attack] remedies a general evil in the repulsion thereof from the whole body of Muslims, whereas the slaying of a Muslim . . . is only a particular evil, and to repel a general evil a particular evil must be adopted.

Pakistani general S.K. Malik would not be considered a terrorist, having belonged to the military establishment of a “strategic ally” of the United States. Yet his book *The Quranic Concept of War*, which was used as a training manual by the militaries of several Muslim countries and honored with a Foreword by Pakistan’s late dictator General Zia-ul-Haq, follows the same reasoning as Al Qaeda. Malik says that “in Islam war is waged to establish supremacy of the Lord only when every other argument has failed to convince those who reject His Will.” In that case, it is “necessary to remove such cancerous malformation even if it be by surgical means, in order to save the rest of humanity.” Once the war is under way, however, Malik admits that it is necessary to strike terror into the hearts of the infidel: It is

not only a means, it is the end itself. Once a condition of terror into the opponent’s heart is obtained, hardly anything is left to be achieved. It is the point where the means and the end meet and merge. Terror is not a means of imposing decision on the enemy; it is the decision we wish to impose on him.

It is possible to dispute the validity of Al Qaeda’s and Malik’s justifications for terror from *within* Islam—that is to say, using the tools of Islamic scholarship. It is *not* possible, however, to dispute the fact that their arguments are based on incontrovertibly valid Islamic sources, precedents, and methods of deduction. They invoke sources and principles that are independent of any capricious or dubious interpretations of the Koran or the *Hadith*. The terrorists may differ from other Muslims in the exact command for action that they derive from the Koran and the *Hadith*, but they all speak the same legal

and theological language.

They speak the same language because Islam as such—and not some allegedly aberrant variety of the “genuine” creed—creates among its adherents the paradigm of a permanent cosmic war that breeds the terrorist mind-set. Antagonism toward the demonized “infidel” is rooted in the conviction that Islam is not only the true faith but the only faith with any truth. Humanity is divided between Muslims and *kafirs*. No matter how much a believer has been exposed to Western or secular thought, no matter which passport he carries or what clothes he wears, his instinctive first priority on meeting a stranger is to establish on which side of this divide that person belongs. Antagonism toward non-Muslim religions, societies, and cultures is not a trait shared by all Muslims, but it is an attitude mandated to all *true* Muslims and prevalent among many. Through *jihad*, Islam has emerged as a quasireligious ideology of cultural and political imperialism that absolutizes the conflict with all that is other than itself and knows no natural limits to itself.

It is self-defeating to deny that Islam has created a moral philosophy and a legal code that, in principle, allows terrorist acts, including the mass murder of innocent women and children. Islam erases individual judgment based on natural morality or on allegiance to any other source of authority but itself, and it mandates submission to the letter of revealed law (Koran) or to the precedent of Muhammad (*Hadith*). Analogies derived in this manner stand above reason, conscience, or nature. Muhammad has stifled in his followers the proclivity to natural law, “this high and often ultrahuman motive” enhanced by education and refinement: “Ignorance deprives savage nations of such incentives. Yet in the marvelous economy of nature this very ignorance is a source of greater strength. It affords them the mighty stimulus of fanaticism” (C.S. Lewis).

A good Muslim is afforded such a mighty stimulus because he is justified by what Allah has commanded, or by what the prophet has said or done. The lack of any pretense to a moral basis for *sharia* is explicit: There is no “spirit of the law” in Islam, no rationality behind it for human reason to discover. There is no discernment of the consequences of deeds, and revelation and tradition must not be questioned. No other standard of good and evil can be invoked, least of all

a notion of “natural” justice.

Islam’s denigration of the individual conscience removes inhibitions against terrorist acts—inhibitions that other religions, other legal codes, and other worldviews reinforce. The dictum of *jihad* befits the demand for an obedient servant’s prostration before a capricious master whose commands have no rational basis. The political consequences are crucial for societies that derive their concept of authority from this image. Any notion of freedom distinct from that which is implicit in total submission is forbidden and sinful. Human imperfection is not subject to improvement in the direction of God.

Finally, Islam provides a powerful means of social and political mobilization in active pursuit, or in tacit support, of terrorism. Its peculiar teaching affects people who otherwise would not be compelled to internalize the terrorist mindset by a “merely” secular ideology (e.g., class struggle, poverty, anger at American foreign policy, Arab nationalism, lack of democracy). Even those Muslims who want to break free from the shackles of the jihadist mentality have a problem in the widespread support among their fellow traditional Muslims—notably among the young second-generation immigrants in the West—for the orthodox variety of *jihad* that breeds terrorism.

The fruits of Islam’s denial of natural morality are as predictable as they are grim, for the Muslims no less than for their victims: Both are enslaved, brutalized, and dehumanized. The fruits of Muhammad’s adage that “only Muslims’ blood is equal” is the curse that cannot be eradicated short of a bold reform from within that seems no more likely today than at any time since his death in 632.

At the end of *No Exit*, Garcin complains of dying too early and failing to complete his acts. Inès responds by declaring, “You are nothing else but your life.” A moribund West is on its way out, and we will never know how many great novels will remain unwritten, scientific discoveries unknown, cantatas unperformed, beyond the end of this century; its ghosts, too, may declare, *On ne m’a pas laissé le temps de faire mes actes*. A victorious caliphate on its European ruins will be nothing else than what its various incarnations have been over the past 14 centuries—which is nothing good, or true, or beautiful. It will be hell, one size fits all. 

COMMONWEAL

The New Reality

by R. Cort Kirkwood

The *Washington Post* calls it "The New Reality." Today, women aren't just flying fighter aircraft or serving on ships, away from action on the ground: They fight in ground combat units, lose limbs, and die in battle. Amputee Lt. Dawn Halfaker, the main subject of the *Post*'s article ("Limbs Lost to Enemy Fire, Women Forge a New Reality," by Donna St. George, April 18), says that old folks sometimes ask whether pushing women into combat roles is appropriate. She offers the tough-dame, feminist answer: "Women in combat is not really an issue. It's happening."

Since we launched our "War on Terror," 60 women have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, 34 of them in combat. Almost 400 have been wounded; 11 are amputees. Historians have concluded, the *Post* reported, that our war in Iraq has produced America's first women amputees, and certainly our first women killed in battle (while serving in roles other than nurses).

Under pressure from the feminists for the last 30 years, the Pentagon has "co-located" women in "non-combat" units, such as military police, perilously close to front-line action; because the war in Iraq has no front lines, many women have been grievously maimed or killed.

Sadly, no one seems to care, particularly not conservatives—not the professional conservatives inside the Beltway; not the pro-family congresspersons on Capitol Hill; not the compassionate conservative in the White House.

Top Pentagon brass accomplished this quiet revolution by allowing women to creep into jobs that made them indispensable to units that would eventually deploy with women and, therefore, could not deploy without women. So, despite official policy, women became *de facto* combatants. According to the *Post*, sociologist Charles Moskos, a member of the failed Presidential Commission on Women in the Military (on which I served as a staff mem-

ber), explains:

"On the whole, the country has not been concerned about female casualties." . . . Politically, Moskos said, it is a no-win issue. Conservatives fear they will undermine support for the war if they speak out about wounded women, and liberals worry they will jeopardize support for women serving in combat roles by raising the subject.

Thus, the sexual revolution has peaked. Conservatives and liberals agree: In America's wars, women must die next to men.

Halfaker's story is emblematic of the "new reality." Though the West Point graduate could not be a combatant under official rules, in April 2004, she earned a Bronze Star commanding a six-hour firefight at a police station in Diyala. Two months later, she was riding in a Humvee when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded behind her head and blew off her right arm. Halfaker, not yet 30, faces a grim future for a woman the *Post* describes as wanting a husband and presumably a family.

The media have promoted the idea of women in combat for some time, and, with military or political cooperation, they have peddled a number of tall tales.

Operation Just Cause, our comic invasion of Panama, was the scene of the apocryphal martial feats of Capt. Linda Bray, commander of the 988th Military Police Company. This modern Athena supposedly crashed through the gates of Manuel Noriega's guard-dog compound in a jeep, her .50-caliber machine gun blazing. Supposedly, three enemy soldiers were found dead after a three-hour battle. Feminists everywhere bugled Bray's bravado. Even the White House joined the chorus. But the story was false. It was a ten-minute fight; no one was killed, except 25 caged dogs; and Bray wasn't there. More recently, we heard about the alleged heroics of Private Jessica Lynch near Nassiriya in Iraq. A convoy of her 507th Ordinance Maintenance Company took a wrong turn; the enemy attacked; and Lynch, according to her hagiographers, played Custer to the Iraqi Indians. Fighting to the last bullet, she was shot, stabbed, and captured, after which she was beaten in captivity. Again,

it was another story seemingly scripted for Hollywood, and, again, it didn't happen. Lynch did nothing heroic. She did not shoot anything and was not shot or stabbed. But the Pentagon let the tale balloon, until someone poked it with a pin.

Lost in these fantastic stories about heroic women is a simple truth: Almost all women are unsuited to physical combat, and, the more women the Pentagon inserts into those positions, the more all troops are endangered. Lt. Kara Hultgreen was the Navy's most famous aviatrix before her demise while landing her F-14 on the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*. The Navy unbosomed a complicated explanation about her F-14 malfunctioning, but the truth was that Kara Hultgreen was an incompetent pilot. She repeatedly made errors that would have grounded a man, including the very mistake that killed her, which she had made twice before. But the political pressure on her commanders to put her aboard a carrier was overwhelming. Hultgreen was a fatality for feminism.

Hultgreen's death surprised no one who heard or read testimony from the Presidential Commission on Women in the Military. Instructors from the Top Gun fighter school told commissioners they had to pass unqualified women—or else.

But facts don't matter to the feminists, congresspersons, or media. They ignore physical reality because they want to impose the "new reality," which goes well beyond female amputees or women in combat: It is the permanent sexual revolution. The question has never been whether women can fight; apart from a few Amazons, most cannot. Everyone, feminists included, knows this, regardless of what they insist publicly about the physical prowess of women. The question has always been whether women *should* fight, and how their fighting, which would alter how women are perceived and treated, would affect the social order.

A Christian society, governed by real men, would never contemplate using women in combat. We, however, live in an anti-Christian society that views women differently from how it once did—not just a century ago, but even 40 or 50 years ago, when the thought of women in combat would have outraged politicians on both sides of the aisle. The revolution's success depended on changing not just how women view women but how men view wom-

en. Mission accomplished. Today, men see women as their equals, unworthy of their protection, which includes exemption from combat duty. Significantly, nutty leftists such as Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan did not achieve victory alone; men helped. Men ran the universities that peddled feminist propaganda. Men ran the courts that legalized abortion and no-fault divorce. Men ran the military when it marched women into combat.

Consider some of the letters I received after I wrote a column about a young mother who enlisted in the military after September 11, leaving her infant behind. In addition to being called "pond scum," a "communist," and an "ignorant liberal," I received the following comments from three different men:

What difference does it make that a woman goes off to war? How is that any different than [sic] a father doing it?

Us [sic] in the military do not distinguish between male and female.

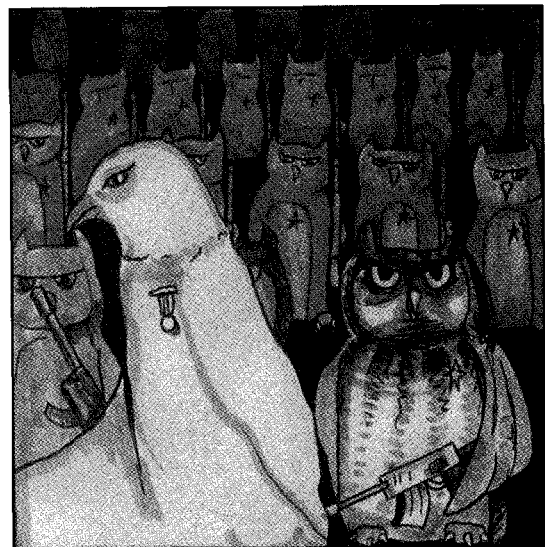
Moms deserve the right to serve the country in any way the nation needs them. No one should be ex-

cused from the front lines.

Meet the gelded American man.

Yet the sexual revolution has created more than women amputees and brainwashed castrati. News reports about the lubricious larks of military women are legion. When I worked for the Presidential Commission on Women in the Military, an aide to an admiral told me that a woman stationed on an aircraft carrier earned \$100,000. You don't have to wonder how this wench of the waves did that, and, despite the Navy's confident claims that "leadership" would control carnality aboard unisex ships, 36 of 360 women deployed on the U.S.S. *Arcadia* during Operation Desert Storm wound up pregnant. The *Arcadia* was dubbed the "Love Boat."

These sexcapades pale beside those in Iraq. The war there has offered the heroics of Lynndie England, the woman who sexually tormented Arab prisoners at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison (commanded by a lady general) then returned home pregnant by a prison guard. The atmosphere at Abu Ghraib was so sexualized that one lady sergeant permitted a handler's dog—used routinely to intimidate inmates—to lick peanut butter off of her



Nicholas Garrie

breasts. When the dog handler was court-martialed, the *Baltimore Sun* published a photo of the lady sergeant leaving the trial, carrying a book entitled *Cunt: A Declaration of Independence*.

The feminists have scaled their Suri-bachi. The revolution has triumphed. Welcome to the new reality.

Cort Kirkwood is managing editor of the *Daily News-Record* in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The Rockford Institute

presents

The History and Literature of the Ancient World

Last year's TRI Academy course has been revised and expanded. "History and Literature of the Ancient World," taught by Dr. Thomas Fleming, is now complete and available in a format conducive to home education. Dr. Fleming holds a Ph.D. in classics from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and is regarded as a leading authority on ancient Greek lyric poetry.

Dr. Fleming provides a survey of Egypt and Mesopotamia before embarking on an in-depth examination of the history and literature of Greece and Rome. Readings include works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, Livy, and Tacitus, among others. The civilization of Europe and the United States is a legacy of ancient Greece and Rome, and the study of the history and literature of these great civilizations is the foundation of any serious education.

Students will receive a set of 33 lectures (audiotape or CD) and an accompanying study guide.

Present course owners may purchase an upgrade (the 6 new/revised lectures and a revised study guide) for only \$20.00. Sign up now.

THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE

928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

Price

\$400.00 for whole year

Nobody's Going to Help Us

United 93 is the extraordinarily convincing faux-documentary of what might have happened aboard the fourth plane hijacked on September 11, 2001. Flight 93 was the one that may have been headed for the Capitol in Washington, D.C., until its passengers stood up to their terrorist captors. In the struggle that ensued, the plane crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing all 44 people aboard.

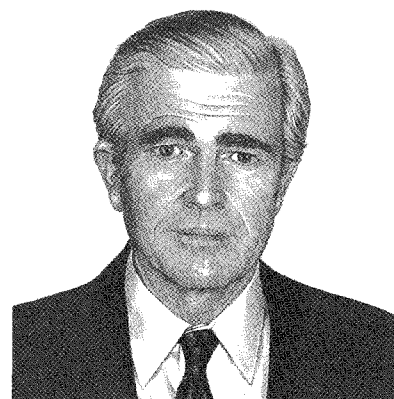
British director Paul Greengrass has chosen to film these events with an uninflected *cinéma vérité* style, apparently to avoid disaster-movie clichés. Fortunately, he hasn't entirely succeeded. If he had, he might have diminished his film's plausibility, for there is good reason to believe the doomed flight followed the disaster-film scenario exactly on that sunny September morning. Over the past 35 years, fictional films depicting terrorist hijackings have established the rules of the game. When the terrorists make their move, passengers are to sit meekly in their seats until Arnold Schwarzenegger or Kurt Russell arrives to outfox the villains and save the day. This is the scenario that seems to have been followed on the real Flight 93 until its last six minutes. There can be no doubt the terrorists counted on their victims having been well trained in civilian docility by American popular culture. Only after the passengers learned *via* their cell phones that other planes had been flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon did they realize what lay ahead. From that moment, they bravely mounted their counterattack. In one of the film's several convincing speculations, the terrorists are shown to be utterly incredulous as the passengers advance on them. This wasn't in their script.

In his one misjudgment, Greengrass has taken care not to bruise anyone's sensitivities, not even those who might sym-

pathize with the jihadists. Such restraint has led him to be slightly at cross purposes with himself. For instance, while he shows us a group of passengers fighting back courageously, he blurs their valor by not identifying them clearly. He films their deeds in such a confusing manner that we can't quite tell how they proceeded. This murkiness seems to have been his attempt to honor the unaccountable request made by the victims' families he consulted. They did not want any of the passengers portrayed as heroes. Abiding by this, the film's nonprofessional actors are barely individualized. The much-publicized exhortation, "Let's roll," can be heard on the soundtrack, but Greengrass has staged the passengers' pell-mell attack so there's no telling who spoke the words that President Bush and his handlers appropriated with unseemly enthusiasm for their rah-rah run up to the Iraq invasion. Is it Todd Beamer, as has been supposed? If so, I could not tell who was playing him. And far from a battle cry, the words are spoken almost *sotto voce* by a man anxiously determined to get on with what he foresees will be a hopeless attack.

Being so few in number, the terrorists come across more clearly. They are presented as dedicated zealots who believe unwaveringly in their murderous mission's justification. Early in the flight, they sit apart from one another in the first-class cabin. In a montage of close-ups, they are shown peering over the backs of their seats at one another and the people they will soon kill. Only their eyes can be seen, coldly watchful. When we do see their faces, we notice that their lips are moving in murmured prayers. It is a sequence filled with unendurable menace.

In its presentation of pathos, the film suitably resembles many another disaster movie. As the plane ascends over Boston accompanied by portentous music, a stewardess confides to another that she would like "to be home with [her] babies." Several passengers talk to one another about their children. Another touts the advantages of a computer program. They are all normal, unsuspecting Americans, blithely unaware that their easygoing lives have provoked seething hatred



United 93

Produced and distributed
by Universal Pictures
Directed and written
by Paul Greengrass

elsewhere on the globe. We watch with mounting dread as the minutes click by.

When the attack comes, it is unbelievably swift. Two terrorists rush the cockpit, banging on its door until the unsuspecting copilot, a large, muscular black man, opens up. One of the terrorists instantly begins stabbing him over and over with a wild, fanatic fierceness. The copilot hasn't a chance, nor does the pilot, who is similarly overwhelmed. There is not a second's hesitation in the attack. Meanwhile, in the first-class cabin, the other two terrorists choose a slight man in his 60's to slaughter. He's an easy target whose killing is clearly meant to horrify the others and send them fleeing to the rear of the plane. This all happens in about ten seconds. This is terrorism—abrupt as lightning and just about as indifferent toward those it strikes.

Over the past five years, many have wondered how four men (five in the other planes) could cow a planeload of people so easily. This sequence explains it better than any treatise. It is not rocket science: Terrorists only need resolve, training, and speed. In their actual photograph, none of the jihadists looked physically imposing, but they possessed all three of these essential attributes. No matter how strong and brave, untrained civilians will instinctively quail before such frenetic determination. Even if you could overcome your fear and fight back, there is the prudential question: *Do I have any chance of succeeding, or will I only make matters worse?* The terrorists were obviously trained to keep this ques-

To Subscribe:
(800) 877-5459

tion vivid in every passenger's mind. As portrayed in the film, they had rigged a phony bomb to make it seem as if they would blow the plane up, should anyone resist. When the passengers finally realize the truth and fight back, the film presents their struggle as a Pyrrhic victory. As a cadre of the able-bodied male passengers rush the cockpit armed with utensils and a food cart, the suicidal jihadists play their last card and fly the plane into the ground, reverently screaming, "Allah is the greatest!"

Throughout the film, Greengrass repeatedly cuts to NORAD headquarters and the air-traffic control facilities in Boston and Long Island. These scenes are as thoroughly unnerving as those in the air. The controllers are incredulous and helpless. Baffled by the scale of the hijackings, they keep trying to contact the people in something called Hijack Control. But no one is on duty. NORAD officers petition the FAA for permission to scramble jet fighters but cannot get an answer. When they decide to send up two jets without authorization, the planes are unarmed. Should they have ordered armed fighters to shoot the airliner down? For that, they would have needed authorization from the President, who could not be reached. One of the passengers, Thomas Burnett, finally got it right when he told the others on board, "Nobody's going to help us. We have got to do it [ourselves]."

Watching this film inevitably raises the question: What would I have done? I have half an answer. Three-and-a-half months after September 11, my immediate family, ten souls in all, boarded a ten o'clock night flight to Rome on United Airlines. My son, George, and his fiancé, Kristin, had decided to marry in Castel Gandolfo, the pope's summer retreat and home to Kristin's mother. It had promised to be a delightful occasion in story-book surroundings, until September 11. My wife, Anne-Marie, and my daughter, Jennifer, became convinced we should cancel, lest we find ourselves on another plane-turned-missile. To allay their fear, I cited statistics demonstrating how unlikely this would be. They were not convinced but nevertheless resigned themselves to the journey. The terrorists had achieved their goal with Anne and Jennifer; they had gotten inside their minds. By late December, they would take up residence in mine as well, their occupation heralded by two more aerial events.

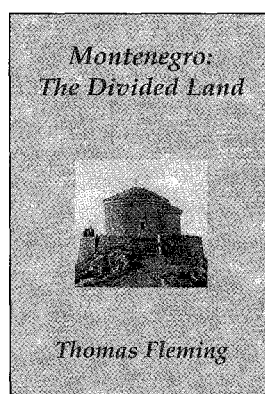
On November 12, an Airbus crashed a few minutes after taking off from Ken-

nedy Airport. Its vertical stabilizer had fallen off, authorities said, admitting this was an unprecedented structural failure. Then, only three days before our scheduled flight, Richard Reid, a.k.a. the shoe bomber, almost blew up another airliner. This was beginning to look like a siege. So, by the time we arrived at Kennedy on December 25, my faith in probability had eroded measurably—so much so that, as a precaution, I had dipped into our coin jar before leaving home and stuffed my trench-coat pockets with fistfuls of quarters, dimes, and nickels. Then, after passing through the airport's security checkpoint, I slipped into a men's-room stall and slithered the coins—weighing about a pound and a half—into a business-blue calf-length sock and knotted it at the ankle bend. Armed with my homemade black jack, I was ready to fly the unfriendly skies. I told no one, of course. I did not want to upset my wife and daughter any further, nor did I want to provoke my son and son-in-law to uncontrollable laughter.

What would I have done had terrorists surfaced on our flight? Probably nothing effective. I haven't been trained in mortal combat. I am not a man of action. I believe few film reviewers are. Even if I had garnered the courage to fight back, I probably would have hesitated at the crucial moment, putting myself and—far worse—my family in immediate peril. And yet, I still like to think I might have broken a terrorist skull or two before going down. As things turned out, I re-

clined in my seat shortly after takeoff and drifted into a five-hour snooze caressed by the jet's reassuringly uninterrupted drone. To this day, Anne-Marie will occasionally reproach me for this gross dereliction of duty. But worse than this, my gesture at derring-do provoked a disturbing thought that, at the time, I managed to stifle. There I was, an anxious, untrained civilian, yet I'd had no difficulty smuggling a murderous weapon onto the plane, despite the airport's intensified security measures. Surely, trained zealots could come aboard equipped far more lethally.

Greengrass has performed an invaluable service in making *United 93*. After its theatrical run, I hope it appears on television regularly. Everyone in America needs periodic exposure to this graphic reminder of September 11. It may be the provocation we need to call a halt to our politicians' inane squabbles over the extent of the danger militant Islam poses and which new multi-billion-dollar bureaucracy must be deployed to defend against it. If we don't stop their posturing, we may find ourselves like the passengers on *United 93* when the next attack comes, forced to conclude that "Nobody's going to help us." As much as I admire the courage of these unfortunate passengers who used utensils and a food cart to wage their counterattack on the terrorists, I am afraid they demonstrated conclusively that neither knives nor forks will do. Even coin-loaded socks are not up to the bloody task. ◊



Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Paperback Price \$19.95

(\$16.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling)

This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.

- send check or money order to 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103
- call (800) 383-0680 to order with MasterCard, Visa, Amex, Discover
- purchase online at the webstore on ChroniclesMagazine.org

A Desert Idyll

For Héctor, Las Vegas was *the* American city. The Strip at night suggested, Héctor thought, an explosion in a fireworks factory—all the flashing, soaring, running, bursting lights in every color of the universe; the gaudy hotels, like upended cruise ships; the fancy stores, luxurious casinos, and romantic cocktail lounges; his compatriots crowding everywhere and jabbering at one another in every dialect known to Viejo Méjico. Vegas was his dream town, a cornucopia of everything he'd sought in coming to the United States in the first place. Las Vegas, Héctor felt, soothed his soul—which very much wanted soothing in the wake of his political disgrace and the Democratic Party's landslide victory when Tomasina Luna crushed his emergency replacement as the Republican candidate for District 1. (That, at least, had not been his doing, as he'd warned Santa Fe in the strongest terms against running his former campaign manager, Haníbal Aragón, in his stead.)

Besides embarrassment to contend with, Héctor now found the Department of Homeland Security, the Minutemen (once again), and *VDare.com*, a viciously anti-immigration website, breathing down his neck. (True, President Bush had praised him, publicly and by name, as a selfless Mexican immigrant seeking only to take upon himself a civic burden of the kind Americans won't tolerate anymore—but that had been on the President's weekly radio address, which, in New Mexico as everywhere else, went completely unnoticed.) Thus, Héctor considered he had a compelling excuse to get away with his family for a week. The MGM Grand Hotel was offering a fall discount rate he couldn't pass up, especially since he'd been able to discount it further by offering to help service the hotel's computers, where needed.

Héctor felt too exhausted following his ordeal to wish to drive the distance to southern Nevada and back. And the airfares between Albuquerque and Las Vegas were dirt cheap, he discovered. The Villas left home in Belen at a quarter to eight in the morning and landed in Vegas shortly before noon, Pacific Time, not over half an hour late after their flight was

nearly diverted to Phoenix when a stewardess observed Dubya pulling a small, orange plastic machine gun from his play bag. The incident caused some further ado on debarkation—certain questions to be answered, and so forth—but for Héctor, twenty minutes later, the sight of the famous Las Vegas Strip lifted his heart in a way that more than made up for the routine unpleasantness of modern air travel. He checked in at the hotel desk and rode with the bellboy and the luggage to the fourteenth (the thirteenth having apparently been overlooked by the construction company) floor, while the family remained below to investigate the marvels of the MGM Grand.

In his expansive mood, Héctor tipped the boy twenty-five bucks, kicked off his Adidases, took a beer from the courtesy bar, and propped himself with fat pillows on the bed to watch TV. From this position, he could also admire, through the window, the towers of the city rising around like grand sequoia trees wreathed in mobile Christmas lights and, beyond them, vaguely through the smog, the sere desert mountains that reminded him, less pleasantly, of the landscape surrounding Namiquipa. Almost an hour passed before it occurred to Héctor to wonder what AveMaría and the kids had been up to all this time, just as a sudden commotion sounded outside in the hall and impatient fists thumped the door.

"¡Papaíto!" Contracepción shouted. "Let us in—quick! I have to pee so bad!"

Héctor opened the door—and promptly fell back into the room, away from the shaggy-maned lion, so realistic it appeared to him full-sized, though, in fact, it stood no taller than about three feet at the head. "¡León! ¡León!" Dubya roared, while Contracepción, over her shoulder on a run to the toilet, screamed, "We visited the *Lion Habitat*, Papaíto!"

Héctor was considering there must be plenty less innocent places for a young girl than the Lion Habitat in the MGM Grand, when his daughter came tearing back from the bathroom, and AveMaría thrust Dubya unceremoniously into his arms. "Here! He wants to go see the lions again. You take him this time, *Panchito*! Contracep's got an appointment in



five minutes at the Grand Spa, and I have one with Christophe—you know, the famous Hollywood beautician!"

Hanging around with a child in his arms to observe a collection of mangy oversized cats wasn't what Héctor had had in mind to do on his first afternoon in Las Vegas. He tried, however, to be a good sport about this.

"OK," he told his wife, shortly. "Try not to make it longer than necessary, though. You know how cranky Dubya gets without his mother. And take that damn lion out of the doorway before someone trips over it."

"His name is Metro," Contracepción corrected him, in a reproving voice. "He's a *nice* lion, Papaíto."

The women vanished like magic as soon as they'd retouched their makeup, leaving Héctor alone with his son and the stuffed lion. A boxing match had started on the closed-circuit TV. He switched it off reluctantly, tied his Adidases back on, and descended with Dubya on his shoulder to the lobby, in search of the Lion Habitat.

The Lion Habitat was inside the Grand Hotel Casino, close by the entertainment dome. To Héctor, it resembled a vast terrarium thirty-five feet high, with waterfalls and a pond, rock ledges, and thick East African foliage, including acacia trees. Eventually, he was able to make out five lions, barely visible over the heads and packed shoulders of a hundred times as many visitors. Though the crowd made it hard to approach the inch-and-a-half-thick plate glass, Héctor felt reassured by its massed presence as he pushed his way with Dubya along a see-through tunnel, with a glaring lioness pacing on either side of him and a huge male lion stretched out on his side for a nap over his head. Dubya, Héctor was aware, was a somewhat obsessive child. He hoped

very much that lions were not about to become another of the kid's obsessions.

When Héctor learned that evening how much money AveMaría had paid Christophe to do her hair, he decided they couldn't afford to eat at the Wolfgang Puck Bar and Grill after all but would order in from Domino's pizza instead. After supper, Contracepción wanted her father to take her to see Céline Dion at Caesar's Palace. But Héctor, pleading fatigue after a long day, promised to take her the following night—and AveMaría, too, if a sitter could be found at the hotel for Dubya.

"I'm going down to the casino for a beer and a game of blackjack," he added. "I won't be gone long—not over an hour or so, is all."

His wife gave him a suspicious look.

"Remember, Héctor—you're not to talk to those *putas* in miniskirts they call cocktail waitresses here."

"*¡Deseo visitar los leones!*" Dubya yelled from the bathroom, where Contracepción was giving him a tub bath.

As Héctor had feared, a single visit had been sufficient to hard-wire the boy's brain so far as the Lion Habitat went. For most of the next day, and the day after that, he found himself nearly as much a prisoner as the lions while AveMaría and Contracepción shopped and took themselves to lunch in exotic restaurants featuring cuisines from all over the world. Héctor and Dubya would watch the dozing lions from various angles for an hour or so, after which Dubya demanded to be taken to the adjacent gift shop to purchase another stuffed one. Then they would return to view the lions again. After two days of this, relieved only by an outrageously expensive evening courtesy of Céline Dion, Héctor was in a rebellious mood. From having read Dr. Spock in Spanish translation years before, when Contracepción was a baby, he knew he should be less selfish and more understanding of the kid's needs. Only, this was *his* vacation, after all!—God and President Bush knew how well earned. He should have left the whole kit and caboodle of them at home, he told himself. AveMaría, however, would never have believed he hadn't spoken a word to those cocktail waitresses the whole week.

The third morning at breakfast, Contracepción offered to take Dubya at eleven, following her belly-button ring implant appointment. Héctor sniffed a rat—he'd noticed the way she and the Mexican kid who worked the cash register at the gift shop ogled each other—but

he was so fed up and frustrated with the way his week had gone as to be almost beyond caring what his daughter was up to. He accepted her offer, therefore, hoisted Dubya onto his shoulders, and took the elevator down to the Lion Habitat. The crowd was denser even than usual, people lined up three deep to gawk at two big lionesses, shiny from a fresh shampooing and lying back-to-back on a flat rock with their black-tipped tails hanging over the edge. Only the thought that, in just two hours from now, he'd be free to buy himself a cold beer and head for the blackjack tables gave Héctor the strength he needed to get through the ordeal.

"We don't want to see any more girl lions, do we?" he asked Dubya in a coaxing voice. "Why don't we look around for the daddy lion—the King of the Jungle—instead?"

Away from the lionesses, the crowd thinned considerably, until Héctor found himself standing almost with his nose against the glass, staring at a pond surrounded by bushes and the mouth of a cave yawning behind it. "Come on now, get down and give Daddy a rest," he said firmly, swinging Dubya off his shoulders and setting him on his own two feet on the concrete floor.

The boy stared at the isolated pond, then started to snuffle and rub his eyes. "*Ningún leones,*" he protested. "*¡Deseo ver algunos leones!*"

Héctor, looking about, spied a man in a keeper's uniform approaching with a bucket in one hand and what looked at a distance like a carpet sweeper in the other. Watching the keeper draw closer, he saw that the man was either Mexican or of Mexican descent.

"Maybe you can help us," he said. "We want to see a *real* lion—you know, like, with a mane. Are they off somewhere hiding, or what?"

The keeper, who had been staring intently at Héctor, never answered him. Instead, he inserted his index and forefingers into his mouth and produced a long whistle. Seconds later, a hairy leonine head in which a pair of amber eyes glowed appeared in the door of the cave. "*¡Eh-eh! ¡Leo!*" the man shouted. The lion, his curiosity satisfied and seemingly unimpressed, lay down, half-in and half-out of the cave, and commenced licking his broad spotted paws.

"You don't count for nothin' with them, 'less you're one of the ones feeds them," the keeper said. "I'm just the Poop-scooper-upper, is all."

Héctor was flabbergasted. "You mean, you climb in there with the lions and follow around cleaning up after them?" he demanded.

The fellow laughed. "You *loco* or something, *hombre*? The owner takes them back out to his ranch in the desert ever evening. *That's* when I get to work, with *this*." He raised the sweeper off the floor as he spoke, and Héctor saw that the thing was in fact an enormous version of a pooper-scooper. "Rest of the time, I'm the *typo* carries out the trash and stuff around here." He winked. "You know—one of them jobs only poor Mexican folk like us will do. *De paso, compadre*—ain't I seen you on television once? The *hermano* got beat up by the *migra* down on the border somewheres?"

Héctor blushed. After living for so many years in the United States, the publicity every American craved only made him uncomfortable—a totally un-American attitude, he knew.

"It was the Minutemen, not the Border Patrol. And they didn't beat me. They called in a couple of agents, who took me in to the station. No big deal, really—I was out of there in half an hour at most, after they'd checked my residency claim."

The Poop-scooper's face suggested he wasn't buying Héctor's story.

"Hokay, *compadre*, hokay! Now I remember—you're into politics, too, over in Arizona."

"New Mexico. And I'm not running for office now and never will again."

The Poop-scooper looked sorrowfully at Héctor and shook his head, as if disappointed in him.

"*Hermano*, it is no good pretending. You are a big man, a real *jefe*—an American success story! You have made good in this country. But you were not born in America, no? From where in Méjico do you come, then?"

On learning Héctor to be a native of Namiquipa, the Poop-scooper rolled his eyes in amazement.

"And I am from San Lorenzo! Imagine! Only a few kilometers away. *Compadrito*! You must allow me to buy you a drink while you are in Vegas. It is Juanito Villalobos who insists. I will not take no for an answer, my friend."

Against his better judgment, Héctor gave the fellow his room number. So far, AveMaría and Contracepción had nothing scheduled for the following evening. It seemed to him prudent he should tie himself up, here and now—if only for an hour or two—before they did it for him. 

The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Seasons and Travels in the New Old West

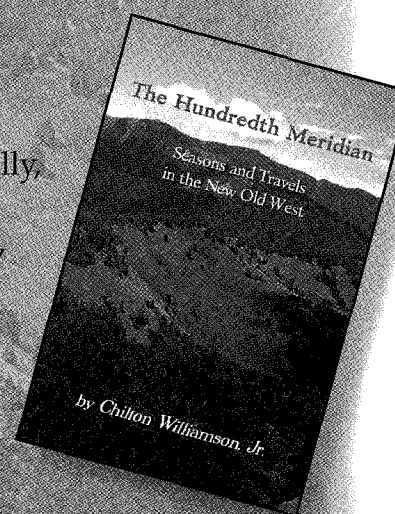
What the Old West had that the New West increasingly lacks are, finally, reality and dignity—the reality of what is basic to human experience, the dignity that comes from acceptance of the physical trials, dangers, hardships, and experience which accompany that reality.

—From the Foreword

Praise for earlier work by Chilton Williamson, Jr.:

"Williamson proves himself a stylish writer with a deft touch in creating three-dimensional characters, and in bringing the bleak beauty of the Wyoming outback to vivid life."—Don Campbell, *Los Angeles Times*

"A novel of wit, intelligence, and high style, enriched with many fresh observations of the eroding American West."—Edward Abbey on *Desert Light*.



The Hundredth Meridian Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Softcover Price \$22.95
(\$19.95 + \$3.00 shipping and handling each)

X Quantity _____

Total _____

Please mail form (with payment) to:
Chronicles/Products
P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054

or, to order toll-free,
call 1-800-397-8160

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ Check or money order enclosed

☐ Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

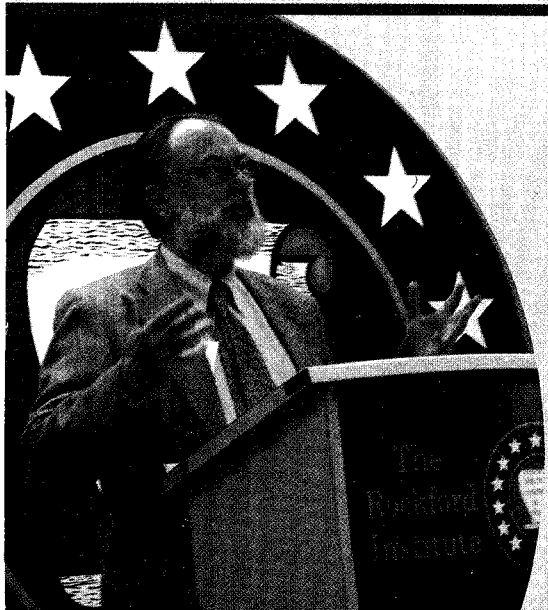
HUND

—From the Foreword

edited by Srdja Trifkovic

Peace in the Promised Land is essential reading for anyone who wants to move beyond sound bites and policy proposals to understand the roots of the conflict—and the role that the United States can play in its resolution.

Signature _____



July 11-16, 2006
Rockford, Illinois

Open to
Students of
All Ages!

Join *Chronicles* editors **Thomas Fleming**, **Scott P. Richert**,
and **Aaron D. Wolf**, along with special guests

Dr. Thomas Landess

Professor of literature and
academic dean emeritus,
University of Dallas

Dr. James Patrick

Chancellor of the College
of Saint Thomas More
in Fort Worth

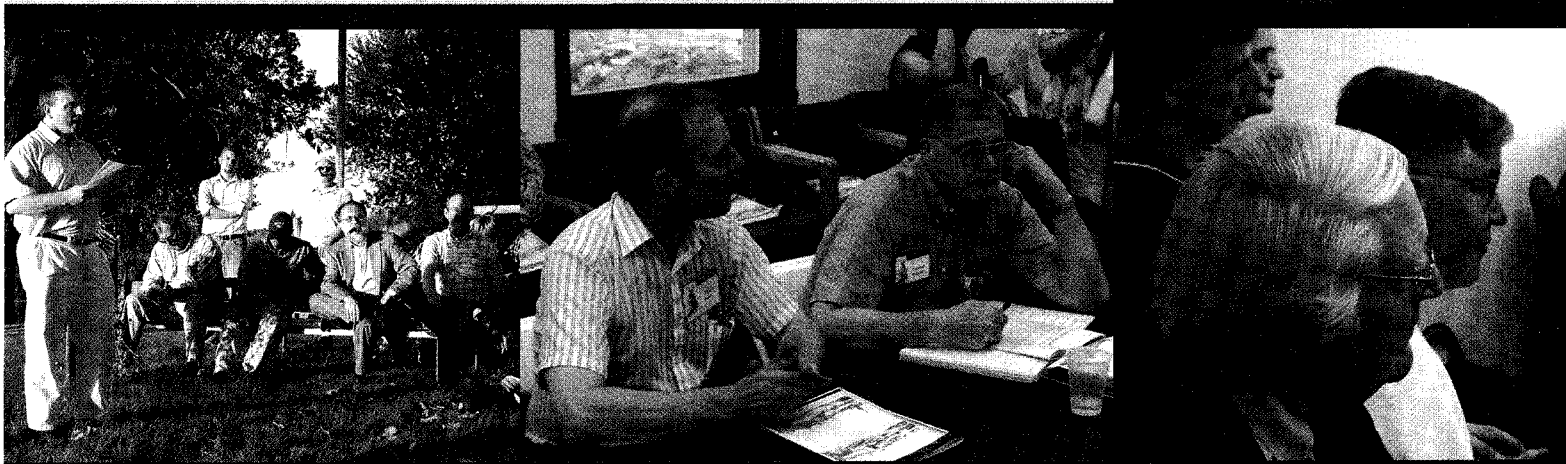
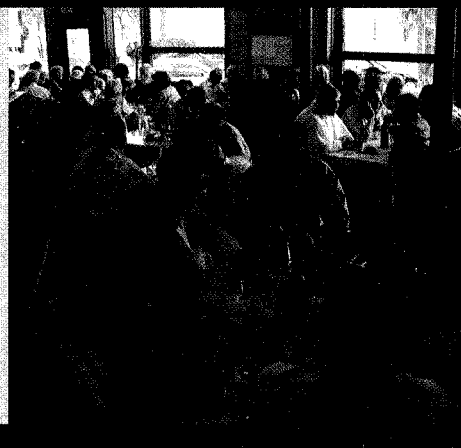
Ian Boyd, C.S.J.

Editor,
the *Chesterton Review*

"The American Agrarian Tradition: From Thomas Jefferson to Wendell Berry"

To many, the word *agrarian* conjures up a vision of nostalgic Southern poets lamenting the good old days down on the old plantation. In fact, the agrarian tradition has little to do with nostalgia and much to do with the cold hard facts of political and economic life. At the very heart of every republic stands the farmer who owns his land and defends his liberty in time of war. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were both agrarians in the true sense, and so were such ancient writers as Hesiod, Cato, and Vergil.

Readings Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*; John Taylor's *Arator*; Vergil's *Georgics* and *First Eclogue*; Hesiod's *Works and Days*; Fr. Vincent McNabb's *The Church and the Land*; Hilaire Belloc's *The Servile State*; G.K. Chesterton's *The Outline of Sanity* and *What's Wrong With the World*; *I'll Take My Stand*; *Who Owns America?*; *Flee to the Fields: The Founding Papers of the Catholic Land Movement*



Please call (800) 383-0680 to enroll in THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE'S
Ninth Annual Summer School

Registration is limited and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Beautiful riverfront accommodations at Rockford's premier hotel: Cliffbreakers River Suites Hotel (www.cliffbreakers.com)

For more information, or to inquire about scholarships, contact Christopher Check at (815) 964-5811 or visit our website, www.chroniclesmagazine.org.

Full Registration

(Includes all lectures and events, five nights' lodging with breakfast, daily dinner)

Double Occupancy—\$695.00 ♦ Single Occupancy—\$795.00

Commuter Registration

Lectures Only—\$325.00 ♦ Plus Dinner—\$425.00

Returning students may deduct \$25.00.

Scholarships are available for undergraduate and graduate students.

Prices are per student and do not include books on the reading list.